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ABSTRACT

The four issues of "SKOLE" published in 1996 include articles about alternatives to public education, the value of free schools and home-schooling, and children's learning experiences. Feature articles include profiles of alternative schools and educational programs; descriptions of learning experiences and teaching practices; a study of full inclusion; discussions of the renewal of education and culture, the power of nonviolence, and Japanese education; suggestions on child rearing; a history of how the current system of compulsory "factory schooling" came about; criticism of the growing use of Ritalin and other drugs with children; interviews with educators and social scientists; and descriptions of three alternative education conferences. Two of the journal issues are devoted to children's poems, writings, and artwork produced by students at free schools and other small alternative schools. Also included are reviews of books, movies, magazines, and audiotapes; commentaries; and photographs. (SV)

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the Journal of Alternative Education

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ΣΚΟΛΕ

the Journal of Alternative Education

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

I got a letter early in October from Bill Ellis, up in Rangeley, Maine, who has been publishing a very good international newsletter called *TRANET*, for at least as long as I've been doing *ΣΚΟΛΕ*, which is to say, since 1985. Reading Jerry Mintz's current *AERO* yesterday, I was saddened to learn that Bill is retiring from this task. We'll miss receiving it, unless someone else decides to take it up!

But—in the meanwhile, I'd like to reply to Bill's comment, which I published in the Fall issue but felt odd about taking up editorial space to answer, since it was a Children's issue—so I'd like to do it now. Sorry it took so long! Here's Bill's letter again, to refresh your memory:

> Dear Mary,
>
> Thanks for the recent issue of SKOLE. It's going home with me to read at more leisure. But I'm getting overfilled with the critiques of the monopolistic teaching systems. We need to move beyond criticism and invent the future learning system. That's what I'll be looking for in SKOLE. My own vision of the LEARNING COMMUNITY is enclosed in the attached. If you know of others who move beyond criticism, alternative schools and homeschooling, I would like to hear of them. KEEP UP YOUR GOOD WORKS.
>
> —Bill Ellis

I've written a response to him, but I thought some of you might like to take it on too. His address is:

Bill Ellis c/o TRANET
PO Box 567
Rangeley, ME 04970

And here's my reply:

Gee, Bill,

I thought I was doing that! My own way of looking at needed changes is that, first, one needs to know for sure that one has a very broad grasp of the problems, as seen by a great many people (which would most assuredly come under the heading of "criticism"). But second, my belief is that we Americans have made far too many changes in national educational policy based on some one person or group's notion of how to solve the problems—as we did when the Russians launched Sputnick and we decided there wasn't enough math or science in our schools—or when the book *Why Johnny Can't Read* came out, and teachers across the land were told to teach kids phonics!

And now the "experts" are blaming "whole language" teaching for lowered SAT scores! Surely it would be a good thing to hear from a lot of people who are DOING what you suggest, not just pontificating about it, before we begin promulgating or inventing "the future learning system." It strikes me that labeling a critique of the present system as overkill misses the point. So, I appreciate your criticism, and hope other readers will feel free to comment, but in the meanwhile I will go on doing what I believe in—namely, "reporting out" on schools that work, as the only way I really believe in for dealing with learning systems, and giving "house" to people who have thoughtful criticisms to make on the status quo.

Maybe I'm just not enough of an ideologue to play the intellectual game, but my experience with people who invent "learning systems of the future," as George Leonard did with his glowing image of education as ecstasy, is that in some cases they look to the future-because they know they can't cope with the prblems of the present. And school boards, superintendents, principals have no interest in innovation. They have jobs to do. Whatever "innovation" filters down to the practical level of school as politics is likely to be a purely political decision. Nothing else is relevant at that level. When you ask that we "move beyond ... alternative schools and homeschooling," I hear you really saying, "Hey—focus on public schooling. Nothing else is really relevant." Fine, if you believe that. I do too, but I don't seem to draw the same conclusions from that notion you do.

I truly believe, as John Gatto has pointed out endlessly, that public education was not set up to accomplish the job you would like it to do. I don't think it ever will. And in the meanwhile, child abuse, addiction, violence, neglect, death and corruption of the inner spirit via rampant and cynical consumerism focused on children which creates lifelong unfitness for natural living has created the mess we are in in our society. I don't think the public schools are ever going to take on solving those problems. It's not their job. Holding up signs that read "DO THIS INSTEAD" makes me think of the last scene in the movie, "On the Beach," where the banner reading "There Is Still Time, Brother" is all that is left after the radiation cloud finally hits Australia. The people are all dead, but there it still stands, blowin' in the wind!

Well, of course it's not that bad, but we have already lost a whole generation of kids, according to Marion Wright Edelman, of the Children's Defense League. I for one am not optimistic about our present capacity for reality. Rush Limbaugh and Newt Gingrich and their lies and propaganda seem to be firmly in the saddle for now—and until their enthusiastic boosters become disillusioned with the messages they are giving out, I suspect we may have to wait until the pendulum begins to swing in the other direction. When that happens, I hope your ideas will be there for us to fall back on. Keep in touch. Or, as Garrison Keilor (sp.?) says, on the writers' almanac, "Stay well, do good work and keep in touch."

Best,
Mary

SECTION I: *School Profiles:*

EAST HILL SCHOOL, ANDOVER, VERMONT

inside out

an occasional publication of east hill school,
summer, 1995

You can't think to change the way you act: you must act to change the way you think. —*Jim Wallis,* Sojourners

Love changes you from the inside out. —*Amy Ray "Strange Fire"*

Contributors: Jon Bliss, Laura Bliss, Leslie Cassano,
Katie Harris, Lyle Axel, Hunt Carlyle

Just Be Good

One of my favorite writers, the poet Donald Hall, tells this story: an aspiring scholar of nineteen, a Harvard junior with the self-assurance to match, Hall is taking a course from one of *his* favorite writers, John Ciardi. One day, after Hall has succeeded in outdoing his fellow students by dissecting a passage of text with particular vehemence, a voice booms from Ciardi's end of the table.

"Hall," he inquires, "Why don't you stop trying to be Great and just be Good?"

Ciardi's question is a wonderful invitation to sink roots into the place *where* we are, to be *as* we are. We don't start out being great, most of us. But in being just good enough we may develop a rhythm of living and working, and a way of seeing that is both hopeful and humble.

Perhaps being "great" is an outgrowth of true humility, a gracious accident that happens when we concentrate on singing our own song well.

> ***For myself, I was greatly moved by the kids who risked something, who learned a small but significant skill, and those who relaxed into the experience of being here.***

This summer at East Hill we've been learning that song. Seventeen children spent some part of three weeks with us honing pottery skills, making things out of wood, exploring our fields and woods, and caring for our two goats. Some of the children needed to spend part of each morning simply playing in the sand, climbing trees, and running or walking through the cool grass behind the Main House. We were inspired by their energy—and encouraged by our ability to match it! For myself, I was greatly moved by the kids who risked something, who learned a small but significant skill, and those who relaxed into the experience of being here. I hope they had fun; they seemed to. I trust that whatever they discovered in their three hours with us will be helpful to them; that is, I hope they persevere in being themselves, that they maintain a sense of humor, and that each one can be a part of building a saner, safer, more joyful world, a world in which Good is fine and Great is a gift.

Which is not a bad plan for any of us. In the fall, when we open "school," it somehow seems important to keep Donald Hall's story before us as a talisman. I'd love to be...you know, better than good. We'll be all right, though, when we're good enough to stop worrying about being anything else.

—Jon

Emma Carter Bliss was born this spring in the early morning of the 18th day of May. She is now a very big three-month-old baby whom we all love very dearly. Although we thought she had turned to the usual head-down position, we discovered after a very short and pleasant labor that she was in a breech position—and because she seemed to be stuck, we all agreed that we should take an ambulance to the hospital (in case she insisted on being born in transit). Our midwives were a great support throughout, but especially during that difficult ride that was the first of the many lessons I know I will learn from this second daughter.

I was prepared and confident of a wonderful birthing at home, but for this little hitch. What I might otherwise have never known was the incredible power I felt in myself and love for all those who were helping me through. It was an experience of transcendence, being lifted during a time of crisis and pain into another world of intense love. Emma was born within ten minutes of arrival at the hospital, healthy and apparently not too distressed by the whole situation. Although the doctor did a masterful job of helping us, my gratitude for being helped did not blind me to the attitudes and routines that caused me to choose a home birth in the first place. With the advocacy of our friend and midwife Debra Bell, we were finally allowed to go home two hours after the birth. Emma continues to nurse and sleep well and responds to us all with a smile that moves through her whole body in what can only be described as ecstasy.

With Emma bundled in the sling and a diaper bag hung on my shoulder I was involved as much as I could be in the unfolding of our summer program along with Jon, our two interns Lyle and Katie and for a few days our friend Leslie, who will work with us regularly this fall. It was a great experience of team work, which is all that I have anticipated it could be and is what gives me such great joy in the process of working out responsively, with individual children in mind, a work that is more than program, but increasingly, I hope, a way of life.

When Jon first proposed the idea of finding interns, I was skeptical that we had enough of value here to return to them in the form of skills, and still more ignorant of what we would gain from them. Among other things, they have, with inspiring enthusiasm, helped me do the hard work of starting a new garden which I hope will continue to welcome experimentation and innovation, be hospitable to children and novices and grace us with wonderful good food.

Beautiful starts were given to us by our friends Dan and Debra, from their CSA program (some of them are still surviving in the flats): incredible amounts of lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, basil and tomatoes. Ann contributed some of her starts too and I have been continually grateful to her for keeping our family garden going as well as being Allie's most consistent and loving Nanny through a difficult time of change and transition for our first little/big girl.

Allie played a butterfly in her first play ever and enjoyed a tree walk with Lyle and Katie where they made rubbings of the leaves and bark of maple and birch trees, gave them names like "Hand" tree and "Paper" tree, and made posters that I wish we could reproduce for this paper.

Pot-making was a most popular activity this summer. With the help of Lyle, Katie and Leslie, we managed to keep it going and even make some pots ourselves. Most of the boys and some girls, with Jon and occasionally Katie, made tool boxes, bird and bat houses, a kitty house and other creations in the wood shop. Everyone wanted to do beading with Lyle and Katie; we sewed, took walks, read aloud on our one rainy day, mulched the garden and planted lettuce, painted, played games and dug in the sand pile, made Fimo beads with Leslie, started a climbing structure, did some singing and rhythms in meeting, made cookies for snack and performed two plays with a nasty wizard, his sidekick, a beautiful mermaid, a butterfly, a wise old sea turtle, and a seal. The second play was performed for parents complete with costumes, painted faces and musical effects from the recorder, drum and pump organ. With a happy summer behind us we are looking forward with much excitement to the fall as we begin to make the necessary preparations of space and program.

—Laura

Destination Education: respect for the integrity of children

There was a child went forth every day and the first object he looked upon, that object he became, and that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day or for many years or stretching cycles of years. —*Walt Whitman*

Learning is a natural process that needs to be cultivated so it can bloom.

Whitman suggests that children learn through discovery. Children need the proper balance of intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual and physical stimulation in school in order to discover and develop their abilities to their true potential. Perhaps it is time to trust our "inner curriculum," our innate ability to learn through imitation, experimentation, and experience. Learning is a natural process that needs to be cultivated so it can bloom. We have been told about falling test scores, disciplinary problems, high drop-out rates, and illiteracy in our schools. It doesn't take an expert to see the rise in violence among adolescents in the world.

As an educator and parent, I am concerned about our system of education. We need to provide our children with challenging methods and materials, and an enriched environment that is nurturing (in the way that home is), and conducive to learning. Children need discovery-based and child-initiated experiences in order to enjoy the learning process. self-esteem, individuality, creativity and imagination must be fostered so that each child may develop his or her gifts.

My journey began seven years ago when I decided to go to graduate school for a Masters in Elementary education. While I was struggling through school I worked in public education. I began to wonder what it was that led me to be a teacher. I was not fond of school as a child and was discovering that the role of teacher was dissatisfying. It seemed to me that even graduate school was frustrating. At this point I decided I had to become accountable for my own education.

Along with the traditional curriculum and methods courses, I began to study alternatives to conventional schooling. My interests turned towards John Dewey, Rudolf Steiner, Lev Vygotsky, Maria Montessori, John Holt, Joseph Chilton Pearce, John Taylor Gatto, and many others (the list is still growing). I researched philosophies on developmental stages, play and imagination in the classroom, the effects of television on children, specific types of curriculum, and multi-aged classrooms. Five years later I finished school, with a grounding in traditional and non-traditional education. My own philosophy reflects the two.

Since graduation I have run an after-school program at a private school in Weston. I had seriously considered home schooling a group of neighborhood children in my home before meeting the Bliss family and learning about East Hill School. I need not go into detail about my feelings for Jon, Laura, and Ann Bliss. I can only say that I have stumbled upon something wonderful. I hope to gain from East Hill new insight and knowledge, as well as the chance to put my "strategies" and teaching philosophy to work. It is my hope that each of us at East Hill, children and adults, can together work through a process that results in positive change for our communities.

—Leslie

Farm Notes *(in no particular order)*

Gracious, gracious. The workday back in June was a tremendous success, and we want to thank everyone who generously gave time and energy to begin revitalizing the Main House. What we accomplished: north side of the building primed, breezeway steps replaced, main steps replaced, main room repainted (to a lovely shade of off-white), north wing steps replaced, ground seeded around north wing, windows of the entry scraped and partially re-glazed, volleyball stakes installed, old cellar roof removed. Twenty-five people in all were involved, and the only thing not accomplished from the agenda was a volleyball game to end the day!

Wish List. Our major need at this point, as you might guess, is money. Given our desire to be affordable to local parents, and our firm resolve not to go into debt, we will probably have a budget short-fall of somewhere between $10,000 and $15,000. We are working hard, with the help of our lawyer Bill Dakin and accountant Larry Read, on the 501(c)(3), or tax exempt, status. Those of you who have already given money will receive notice when we've been cleared by the IRS so that you can claim your deduction. We'd appreciate any other direct gifts, and also welcome suggestions for Foundation sources.

Other needs: child-size chairs; apples (in the fall) for cider and sauce; a simple tape-CD player; drawing and painting paper; children's cross-country skis; drums and other rhythm instruments; math manipulables (check with us on specifics); quality literature for 7-10 year olds (again, check with us); cloth for sewing; good scrap wood for shop projects.

Revisiting Woody. Woody Guthrie arrived in New York sixty years ago with a beat-up Gibson guitar and a head full of extraordinary songs. At age ten I discovered that "This Land Is Your Land" has the classic C-F-G chord progression, and hence stumbled onto one of the secrets of his magic: simplicity. For those just starting to make their own music, or those concerned to keep music uncommercialized, Woody's legacy is one of spareness and a determination to share his vision of a more just society. It's a vision all of us could stand being reconnected with from time to time. I suggest hearing Woody "in the flesh" on the old Library of Congress recordings, and than listening to some of his best interpreters: Pete Seeger, Judy Collins, and Utah Phillips. Allie enjoys Trillium's version of "Stepstone," which catches the sweet hopefulness in his best music. Now go learn a Woody song.

Action and Environment

It has long been understood that everything in the universe is interconnected. From rocks to animals to clouds to our cars, everything affects everything else. Living in such a large complex society, and being alienated from the natural world, it is hard for many of us to see the connections we all share with our world and each other. The cycle of food production for some of us begins at the grocery store and ends in the garbage can; only a

The abilities to define the options and to idealize the consequences of each alternative are very important tools to children's empowerment.

few of us see food coming from the earth and returning to the earth (or from the lab to the landfill, as the case may be). Another problem that complements this shortsightedness is the inability to seek alternative options. Inertia is a powerful force that keeps people from proactive change. Children must be taught that there are choices to every action so that they can be engaged in their behavior and choose how to affect their world based on knowledge of our interconnectedness.

The abilities to define the options and to idealize the consequences of each alternative are very important tools to children's' empowerment. If a child doesn't like the ripples she is causing, she can choose to throw her stone elsewhere. Then she can feel more involvement in her world and more responsibility for her actions. At East Hill, the child's environment is filled with obvious connections that foster an understanding of the relationship between action and effect, behavior and environment, self and world. Working in the garden, composting our lunch, walking in the woods, and having meaningful interactions with a small group of children and adults nurture the vision of interconnectedness. Enabling a child to explore the connections she has with the world will create more thoughtful choices, empowered results and a more mindful way of living.

—Lyle

Environmental education used to be equated with science-based ecology study. The field is now working towards the embodiment of a more true definition of its terms. As environmental educators we strive to take into account the whole environment of each student—the history and culture of their family, their surroundings on their walk to school, whether urban or rural, the topics and people they care about—as well as the flora and fauna that inhabit their world. Everywhere is the "natural world," the "environment." It all affects each child, and adult, in different ways. No one's lens through which they view the world is the same, and therefore the same picture has varying meanings and degrees of relevancy for different people. Children must be given the trust and power to follow their natural curiosity to its

Children must be given the trust and power to follow their natural curiosity to its fruition.

fruition. If they are enabled to look at their world through history, science, music, math, etc. and explore their interests, this will be true environmental education. True environmental education is not working specifically towards the creation of an ecologically aware population of bulk buyers and recyclers. It instead trusts that if each child is empowered in their relationships and their education, they will become empowered adults whose behavior will not need to be prescribed, but who instead will be responsible to themselves, each other, and the world in which they live.

—Katie

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"...once you've read and used this book, you and your children will never again view the natural world in the same way." - *Wendy Priesnitz, Editor, NATURAL LIFE*

This article is eprinted from the **National Coalition News** *of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools for Fall, 1995. Its author, Bill Kaul, is a frequent contributor to ΣΚΟΛΗ. Thanks, Bill, for this important report on a very important subject—the heartless neglect by Americans of our "minorities." See the review of Jonathan Kozol's new book,* **Amazing Grace,** *on page 99 about the appalling conditions tolerated by the people of the city of New York and the residents of New York State (of which I am one, alas!). The fact that Shiprock defines itself as "alternative" may perhaps give other members of alternative schools something to ponder about.*

SHIPROCK ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO:

THOUGHTS ... ON ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

by Bill Kaul, teacher

(after a semester at Shiprock Alternative High School)

Control here seems to be *the* major issue... control of students, control of faculty, control of outcomes, control of curriculum. Toward an effort at better, closer, more streamlined control, various *systems* have been tried, abandoned, altered. Each system has as its basis better **control** of a population, whether faculty or students. This has led to a turnover of faculty and staff at SAHS that doesn't speak well of its efficacy or its atmosphere. It's like a hospital that can't keep staff, and as a result the patients keep dying. The atmosphere is often one of fear and intimidation, a power struggle between student and student, student and teacher, teacher and teacher, teacher and administrator.

For example, in an effort to allow for control of speech and behavior in both faculty and students, there is a category of infraction described in the policy manual and student handbook. This category is called "insubordination." Interpreted rather freely, its design is similar to the same category of infraction in military parlance; namely, it is aimed at **control**... and results in a climate of fear and intimidation (euphemistically called "respect").

Again, in an effort to put a patina of "self-control" on various categorical infractions, a contract system has been designed

What would a school look like that has no preset curriculum, no bells, no passes, no preset hierarchy of control/administration, no grades, no preset graduation requirements?

and implemented. This system looks good on the surface; it seems to offer students a choice in their behaviors, with clearly described outcomes. In fact it does this—but on what are these choices based? They are based on norms of behavior which are given to the student via the usual hierarchy. Their effectiveness is thus based on the degree to which students fear consequences of non-compliance. It has been my observation that many of the people in the population we serve are quick to see this, and since the norms of behavior they are expected to follow aren't coming from internal, but rather external, sources—the same old thing, in their eyes, conform or leave—they often aren't convinced by rewards or punishment. The consequences are trivial, when stacked alongside their struggles for autonomy.

What this points up is the nature of this school, as seen by many of those who attend it: bells, hall passes, due dates, rules and regulations by the dozen; all, business as usual: repression and control—precisely the things they are trying to escape and have already given ample evidence they have no respect for. That, often is why they are here—they cannot be controlled in a traditional school environment. (That may be why I am here as well...) So, which action? More control (coercion to conform to the traditional); or, a complete rethinking of what a "school" and an "education" might be?

What is now "alternative" was at one time quite mainstream, both in Europe and pre-colonial terra incognita.

What would a school look like that has no preset curriculum, no bells, no passes, no preset hierarchy of control/administration, no grades, no preset graduation requirements? Consider Summerhill, the Albany Free School, Antioch—such "un-schools" are a reality, and have been since long before Maria Montessori and probably even Socrates. What passes for schooling in Western Kultur is in fact of rather recent medieval origin. What is now "alternative" was at one time quite mainstream, both in Europe and pre-colonial terra incognita. (See Beck's social histories of education, or Luther Standing Bear's treatises on "natural" education.) These alternatives still exist, but since they frequently fail to serve the needs of corporate America, they are marginalized in favor of more Taylor-like, production-plant-type factory-schools.

Where does "control" come from in "alternative" schools? There, control is internalized, and it is secure because its source is clear. For example, at Summerhill, governance is accomplished through what are basically "town meetings," in which all have a say. Commonalities are formed, not assumed.

(It has been suggested that we develop a student-administered legal system at SAHS—an exciting possibility, but only if the laws this student court enforces and judges are laws students have had a major hand in developing. Otherwise, we are back to business as usual—the same hierarchical control under a new guise of autonomy.)

If they are looking for a place that challenges them to rethink education—to rethink society, ultimately—then it is usually hard to stop parents from participating in developing an alternative education for their children.

Parental involvement in these other schools varies. Much, of course, depends on the parents—if they are looking for a place to dump their uncontrollable kids, or a prison to reform them ("straighten them out"), then an alternative school isn't the place for them. If they are looking for a place that challenges them to rethink education—to rethink society, ultimately—then it is usually hard to stop parents from participating in developing an alternative education for their children. These "alternative" schools are exciting; they have proven themselves for years now, and there is much to learn from their experience.

When I came to SAHS, I assumed that I was coming to such a place, where such ideas were encouraged ... I was wrong (misled, actually). Still, I haven't given up hope. Nor have I given up integrity, except in small, easily digested granules so my kids can continue to eat.)

But let's rethink these things together; things like "norms." I'm an Anglo, so I make no claims at being a "Navajo expert" or an "Indian expert." I would be disturbed if indigenous peoples weren't suspicious of me. History alone would call for suspicion of my motives, if not for my summary execution.

In fact, I find it ethically difficult to teach "English" at a school in the Diné [Navajo] Nation, precisely because of the history of such education, wherein children were forced to attend school, forced to abandon *Diné bizaad*, forced to pray to strange gods, celebrate strange holidays, use odd diction, memorize imperial literature. In those days, "ditching" was a real enterprise, fraught with all the implications of a jailbreak (or so I've learned from reading accounts of those who tried). There is, arguably, a Diné tradition of ditching, of running away from oppressive schooling, of resisting instruction in the language of the invading nation. It makes the profession of English teacher here problematic, at best.

I'm not here to colonize minds.

Still, I am an English teacher. To keep myself ethically comfortable enough to function, I have defined this role as encouraging the use of language(s) to explore the world around us, while maintaining a healthy distrust of the dominant society that demands a particular kind of English. It also means that I cannot promulgate a particular philosophy—of any sort, Anglo or Diné or Martian. As soon as I do that, free inquiry and critical thinking are out the window, mere exercises conducted on my imperial terms. And I'm a (sort of) Socratic teacher, not a cop or a preacher. I'm not here to colonize minds.

It is my observation that most of the students at SAHS are aware of and proud of their cultural heritage(s) and language(s). Many of them exhibit the healthy distrust of me and the English language I would have expected. Many also are in open rebellion against the norms of their society and the dominant society(ies), and would like to rethink their philosophy(ies), to make changes in their world (although they largely feel powerless to do so, hence the value of empowerment through language and action). I don't know of any students who want to deny or turn their backs on their cultural heritage, but I do know of many who think that it's time to change the way that heritage is celebrated within the context of the dominant society(ies).

It's only through working and fighting and loving together that we make it at all. Whether we make it as sheep or robots or as fully wired human beings is up to us.

I certainly don't feel comfortable—since it's their struggle—telling them to follow certain norms that have been handed to me by others. It's more my job to help them in their questioning and searching—that's my own history. My experience teaches me that we become more receptive to tradition as we age, but that youthful rebellion is an important foundation. Not only does youthful rebellion challenge and expand traditional knowledge, it allows for the development of a questioning, critical and open way of seeing that is useful throughout life.

It is also dangerous.

But then life, at best, is dangerous. Nobody gets out alive. It's only through working and fighting and loving together that we make it at all. Whether we make it as sheep or robots or as fully wired human beings is up to us.

What can be done immediately to make some changes at SAHS? We could start by having a school-wide meeting (including students and parents!) to help define what we mean by "alternative." We might *open* the school to include the community. Modify *requirements* for attendance, grading, credits? Develop opportunities for exploration, jobs, survival skills? Perhaps the school needs to be scaled down into different "colleges" or—as at Hampshire College—various "affinity groups" need to be formed on a semester-to-semester basis?

I have seen a lot of very good things happening here, a lot of very disturbing things, a few very puzzling things. I have participated without directing, and have observed closely to see how I can best serve the needs of the young Diné students. Already I have learned much from them, and I hope to learn more—more about what does work, rather than what doesn't...

From *The Waldo [Maine] Independent*, Thursday, March 9, 1995:
(Contributed by Emanuel Pariser from the Community School, Camden, Maine, a long-time friend and contributor.)

A PROGRAM TO HELP TEEN PARENTS FINISH HIGH SCHOOL

by Toni Mailloux

It's easy to forget how young Nancy Shaw is. She's bright and articulate, the mother of an almost two-year-old son, who is juggling those demands with working 20 to 35 hours a week at the Liberty Trading Post and taking an EMT course.

But Shaw is only 17 years old, and one of her top priorities right now is getting a high school diploma.

She'd been a student at Belfast Area High School, participating in BCOPE, the alternative education program, but then she, her boyfriend and young son moved to Liberty. She wanted to go back to regular high school but child care was a problem and she didn't really want to start her senior year at a new high school.

So Shaw decided to give the Teen Parent Diploma Program of The Community School in Camden a try. She can get her diploma through the program and learn some life skills at the same time.

The program is geared around the "Walkabout" model of education, a three-stage educational process designed by Dr. Maurice Gibbons. Gibbons' theory is that students will be better prepared for adulthood if they create, plan, carry out and document their own learning program.

In the Teen Parent Diploma program, the first step is an initial assessment and creation of an individual graduation plan. Then students are required to demonstrate competency in 22 "core skills." Those include: early childhood development, locating community resources. child abuse prevention, developing a support group, creating something, job hunting, homemaking, shopping, infant care, first aid, writing, nutrition, conflict resolution. sexuality, math, transportation. critical thinking, parenting, citizenship, budgeting, scientific method and reading.

After competency has been determined in those core skills, the student works on "passages," developing three projects in one or more of the following areas: child raising, explorations of practical skills and career experience, volunteer service, global awareness, personal growth and logical inquiry.

Credit may be given for work done in a variety of settings and for knowledge and skills a student already has. For example, Shaw will more than fulfill her first aid requirement by completing the EMT course she's presently taking with the Liberty Ambulance crew.

The 14- to 20-year-old teen parents are provided with a teacher who meets with them in their home or at another place they both agree on. There are home tutoring and counseling, some group workshops and connections to a community network of teen parent support services.

Shaw says the program is "pretty great," with the only disadvantage being the lack of social time with friends that regular school provided. She says her child's father is wonderful about watching her son Andrew when she needs time to study.

Presently she's working on budgeting and has been keeping track of the family's expenditures for three months. Shaw also likes to write and, during this session, she and her teacher. Nancy Bouffard, are going over a paper she recently wrote and deciding how it might be even better. She'd like to receive her diploma in June but right now Shaw is only halfway through the core skills, so that may be difficult. She still needs to decide on her "passage" projects but for now she's pleased to be working toward her goal and to have Nancy to help her get there. The program runs year round so Shaw won't have to worry about losing time if she needs it to finish.

The Teen Parent Diploma Program is curently serving seven teen parents or their partners in Waldo County and two in Knox County. There are two teachers involved and a number of volunteer tutors and others providing transportation and child care for the students as needed.

The program, which is in the pilot stage, is paid for by the school system that the student would normally attend. The current cost is $3,500 or the subsidy per student received by the district from the state, whichever is less. The program is operated as part of The Community School's state-approved high school program. It is geared for parenting teens who have dropped out of school or their partners.

For information about the program, call Nancy Bouffard at The Community School, 236-3000, or at her home, 338-4972.

Celebrate Cultural Diversity

Three Award-Winning Picture Books (With Activity Guides!)

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Las paredes hablan

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• Best Multicultural Book, 1993, *Publishers Weekly* "Cuffie Award." • *American Booksellers* "Pick of the List," 1993

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REVIEW:

You will find a review section offering information and materials for homeschoolers (and others concerned with rewarding and relevant education for children) starting on page 126, but we decided to put our reviews of the collection of highly relevant books and articles we have gathered for you which touch on "schools and school people," "teaching and learning," "the lives of children" and "issues in education" in the sections devoted to those important topics.

SCHOOL WITH FOREST AND MEADOW

by Ikue Tezuka

Published by Caddo Gap Press, 1995
San Francisco, CA 94118 ($17.95 paper)

Reviewed by Nancy Ost

In this delightfully illustrated and well-written little book lies all the truth about how school, when done with heart and wisdom, benefits each individual child's growth. Through scenarios of the activity-filled days at Ojiya Elementary School, Ikeu Tezuka captures us into the world of joyful and excited children as they learn in an atmosphere created by Giichiro Yamanouchi, a teacher and principal in elementary schools in Japan for many years. He practiced and taught to others his belief that the central purpose of education is the creation of joy. In *School with Forest and Meadow* we read how Yamanouchi learned to listen to the natural environment around his schools and to incorporate this into the education of the children. Through his willingness and ability to enter into the flow of life which already existed in the village or in the neighborhood of each school he was at, he created a learning environment which reached beyond the four walls of the school building and fed the whole community, as well as the children.

In Ojiya Elementary School Yamanouchi helped to create a forest and a meadow on the school grounds. These natural environs became an essential part of the children's school life. As a result of growing and caring for the many plants and animals that made their habitat in this school yard, Yamanouchi saw that the children were learning to love and care for each other and for the larger earth family. The increasing incidents of bullying and "school refusers" which Japan is experiencing was replaced by children arriving at school before the teachers, eager and enthusiastic about the adventures which the day promised. Children wrote stories and poems about these adventures with nature and filled their parents' ears with all the wonder of what they were doing. As a result, parents and others in the community became involved with creating and nurturing this forest and meadow.

> ***The teachers talked to the mothers and discovered... that the children spent most of their time playing computer games and rarely had any opportunity to be in close contact with animals or with the natural environment. The teachers began to realize how important it is that children be able to have close experience with living creatures so that they can come to appreciate and value them.***

Yamanouchi uses the term "Whole Human Development" to describe his approach to education. The following quote from *School with Forest and Meadow* illustrates beautifully the philosophy of this special educator:

> ***Schools must be places to learn about both the natural and the social dimensions of this local environment. Thus, the school's curricular materials consist not only of books, but of all the wondrous things in the child's surroundings, such as forests, rabbits, fowl of many kinds, goats and other animals, mountains, rivers, and fields. Children learn through this kind of intimate contact with natural phenomena. When in this kind of natural learning, children become animated and excited and want to share their new discoveries with their families and their local society. They learn how to keep company with nature and are interested in environmental problems.***

Ikue Tezuka's accounting of Yamanouchi's refreshingly creative methods of teaching children is a not-to-be-missed opportunity to nurture that place within us that knows instinctively that joy is a natural result of the learning process.

DESCHOOLING OUR LIVES

See review on page 106 of Matt Hern's splendid new book pictured above, a collection of essays on "de-schooling" —a term Matt borrowed from Ivan Illich, whose essay is one of the collection.

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SECTION II: *Teaching And Learning:*

A NATURAL WONDER. PERSPECTIVES OF THE GRAND CANYON

by Robert L. Kastelic, Ed.D.

Our flight left Sky Harbor Airport in Phoenix right on schedule. It was a beautiful clear day. The trip began with the normal routine announcements. The flight attendants described safety practices and the pilot welcomed us as passengers to the flight. The 727 jet climbed away from our earth-locked reality at an amazing thrust. In a few minutes time the plane began to level out to its cruising speed.

There we were at approximately 30 thousand feet. The pilot or navigator came on the intercom, [click, click] "Aah, Good Afternoon everyone. We're flying over the Grand Canyon right about now. It's a pretty clear day and it's quite a sight. Ahh [click, click]. That's out your left window, for the best view." [click]. Say no more. Inside the passenger cabin, obedient and maybe overly curious people crowd themselves over highbacked seats to look out the windows. "Ahh's and oohhs" prevailed as the expression of the moment. Some people even charged across the aisle to grab a glimpse of the Canyon. A couple of people took photographs through the double pane glass. It almost appeared as though some people really see something. But, I wonder, what can they be seeing of the canyon at 30 thousand feet and traveling at the approximate speed of 600 mph? A women sitting next to my wife asks if the Canyon is out her side or the other side of the plane. My wife calmly remarks, "It's on this side," and gestures toward the window. "Oh yes, why there it is!" the lady cries out with the enthusiasm of an explorer discovering something. "I see the river," she cries out She almost claps her hands but restrains herself at the last second. In a sort of comic way, it's as if we are watching a television show and the people are acting out designated roles. In a few moments we've passed over the Canyon and the people return to their respective seats.

I wonder if anyone can actually appreciate or comprehend what they were looking at given the variables of the speed and distance. This is the Grand Canyon! A Natural Wonder of the World. Futhermore, I wondered what they thought they were going to see. "Maybe they're looking in earnest because they think they might be missing something," I thought to myself. The window-peering exchange brings a personal recall of all the times we have hiked in the Canyon.

For a number of years my wife and I backpacked into the Canyon during wintertime. As I sit back and adjust my seat to a more comfortable level, I recall the most recent trek into the Canyon with our sons at Christmastime. This Canyon trek was different because this was the first time we took the boys. They were old enough now and we thought a canyon trek would be fun. We had prepared for months. Getting all the necessary equipment, food, and arrangements taken care of is always a challenge. We learned at an earlier stage in the backpack game to pack as light as possible. Small things can get heavy in a very short time while hiking in and out of the Canyon. TakIng only what one needed in the winter was tricky . The temperatures on the Rim of the Canyon at the beginning of the trail might be freezing while at the bottom, Phantom Ranch, it could be in the mid sixty-degree range. Water, which weighs eight pounds per gallon, is a precious commodity no matter what the temperatures. We brought a four-man L.L. Bean tent on this trek. While it was big enough for all of us it was also heavy. The weight adds up fast. It takes a careful eye and some common sense to determine what will go and what will stay.

Our enthusiam ran high as we prepared our pack frames and strapped them up on our backs ready for a four day trek. Ben, our oldest son, was ten years old and Nathaniel was seven years old. Each had their own pack frame and an appropriate weight inside.

Over the years we had brought the boys to the canyon several times. Each time we left the Canyon stating that we would bring them back and hike down into the canyon. That "some day" was here now .Our energy levels were running high and we needed to get on the trail and burn some of it off. As we left, it seemed that we had covered all of our bases and considered all of the hikmg considerations. We began our hike down the Bright Angel trail in earnest. Our first camp was scheduled for the Indian Gardens campground.

There is nothing gentle or gradual about the Bright Angel trail. In many ways hiking the trail reminds you of your age and how out-of-shape you've gotten. In other ways it's unforgiving, in its brutal attack on your thighs and heels going down and challenges your back and lungs coming up the trail. It's my guess that after hiking any of the trails in the Grand Canyon the average person is not likely to forget the hike. As one hikes on the rocky, winding, and dirt packed trail, it is graphically presented how enormous the canyon is. You could hike for days and only cover a speck of it. I recall one night years ago being at the bottom of the Canyon next to the Colorado River looking up at the stars. As so many times before, I got that I'm-rather-insignificant-in-relationship-to-the-starry-skies feeling. And on this trek, I recall having a double sensation by realizing I was a speck in relationship to the Canyon too! Going into the Grand Canyon is in many ways like climbing inside the earth. Each layer is cut away for you to slip through and desend into. Down you go to the point where the water is still working at revealing even more. Having spent many days observing in the Canyon, its beauty is always being revealed to me through millions of years of conflict. The conflicts of the wind, water, erosion, and time have all worked to create beauty. The power of conflict is demonstrated in a very spectacular manner. This presentation of beauty is in the continual state of change. Wherever one stands in the Canyon you can see the results of conflict and change from a different point of view.

Our hike down the trail was work. There is no easy way to hike down the trail. National Park Service signs alongside the trail remind the hikers of the stress of the trail. We took our water and snack breaks along the way. The kids always seemed to have an innocent enthusiasm and sped on ahead of us challenging each other. As soon as we got into camp we began looking for a suitable place to set up our tent. We finished dinner just as the sun ducked behind the ridge and some dark and heavy snow clouds drifted over us. Later that first night it began to snow. This was not a gentle flurry, this was a blizzard! We got in our tent and tried to sleep. Around three A.M. I got up and swept off the snow that had piled up on the roof of the tent. Preventing a possible cave-in was a key concern. It was pitch black outside the tent. Only a faint glow of lights could be seen up on the rim. They were the lights of the Bright Angel Lodge, a lodge that now seemed another reality away. We managed to snuggle together and get through the night. The hike had probably helped us sleep somewhat soundly. The next morning we got out of the tent into the snow-packed canyon. The air was biting cold . We needed to make some decisions about our plans to continue the hike. We checked at the nearby ranger station and got the weather report . A large storm system had blown in and there was more snow coming. We had to hike out today or risk a few more days confined to the tent. A lot of our gear was soaked without the possibility of drying out soon. We talked the options over with the boys and made the decision to hike out. The hike back up to the rim was challenging in a whole new way. Your muscles are worked in a reverse way as you lean into the pitch of the trail. Because all our gear was wet there was now some additional weight to haul. We began packing up and hit the snowpacked and icy trail. At times it was a little hard to even see the trail ahead, but following the ocasional mule train helped to define the route more clearly. The mule urine and snowpacked trails combined to make slush holes along the way, a very uncomfortable spot to slip and fall.

I don't think anyone could see this sight from thirty thousand feet looking out a jet window. It wasn't long before our sons complained of wet feet. Boots had not held up to the snow and slush. I emptied our food bags into the packs. We had packed our food in plastic ziplocked bags. Then, they put their last pair of dry socks on before slipping their feet back into the soaked boots wrapped in the plastic ziplock bags. It worked well enough to keep their feet dry and somewhat warm for the rest of the hike up. We made it out all right . A hot shower, warm drinks, chocolate chip cookies, and a warm motel room helped to ease our sore muscles.

Each time we have come to the Grand Canyon it has had a different look about it. We have managed to make a point of arriving there during different seasons. This trip we had planned with a winter perspective in mind, but not quite like this. Yet, this too was the Grand Canyon and in a different sort of way it was beautiful. On our quick exit hike out we actually stopped and took a variety of photographs of the snowpacked Canyon. With each visit we would note the the sky color and the light. The light plays such a variety of dances in the Canyon that it's hard to ever see the same combination twice. The clouds sweep their way over the Canyon like a blanket at times, and then at other times are like puffy lazy pillows. We have also seen smog-filled Canyon skies, polluted from the nearby power plants. Which Canyon were we seeing? Were all of our perceptions created by the many variables which caused us to see the same Canyon ? Or was it different every time? Could we ever see the Canyon the same way twice?

It seems that looking at the Canyon from thirty thousand feet is a lot like looking at the stars at night. You're not really sure what you're looking at. Things are so far away and the backdrop is so immense that to take it all in would overload your capacity to digest. So, you just observe in awe and think of yourself as a part of the whole . Maybe those folks on the plane already knew something that I was just beginning to figure out? At thirty thousand feet we were all in the same plane, yet we were all perceiving the Grand Canyon differently. Wow! And some people say it's a *small* world.

THE GRAND CANYON TRIP

by Nathaniel Kastelic, 10 years old
5th grade Aztec Elementary School in Scottsdale, Arizona

Hi, my name is Nathaniel Kastelic. Today I'm going to hike the Grand Canyon for my seventh birthday, which is on December 27th. We began by packing the car with things we needed for our trip, like backpacks, hiking boots, warm clothes, tent, sleeping bags, pads and all kinds of food that you can make a meal out of by just adding water. Our journey to get there was five hours of driving, a long time for a seven year old!

When we arrived at the Grand Canyon we put on our boots and backpacks and went over to the edge to look down to where we would be hiking. It was cold and snowing, the wind was blowing hard, but we were going to do this whole hike together, my brother Ben, my mom Lucy, my dad Bob, and I. Finally we decided to HIT the trail.

The snow and ice had made the trail very slippery. To make things worse there were big puddles of mule pee in some of the low spots on the trail, so we were always afraid if we fell we would fall right into one of those pee puddles! We hiked slowly and carefully. We passed two guys that had spikes on their boots to keep them from slipping; we wished we had some of those on our boots. In some of the places on the trail there were big puddles of melted snow, there was no way to get all the way water into our boots so our socks kept getting wet and cold.

We finally got to the campground at Indian Gardens. We walked all over looking for a place to set up our tent. We found one that was flat and had a shelter built over a picnic table. After setting up the tent and getting some dry clothes on we made supper. We had chicken noodle soup, crackers, granola bars and hot chocolate. Everyone went to the bathroom one more time before they went to bed; no one wanted to get up in the middle of the night when it was snowing and go out. We climbed into the tent and got into our sleeping bags. We were so warm and fell asleep right away.

Overnight it snowed, but we did not know how much until my dad got up and went outside at three in the morning. There was so much snow our tent was starting to cave in, so my dad went out to brush it off. When it started getting light we got up. To our surprise we were in a puddle of water. All of the snow around our tent had melted under us. The bottom of the tent was like a waterbed, all slushy.

We walked down to the ranger station and got an update on the weather. We were told another storm was coming in that day. In fact there were three more storms that would last through the week. At that point we decided that we would hike out of the Canyon and try the hike some other time. We packed up all our gear. Everything was damp from the night before. This made everything much heavier. After getting some breakfast of instant oatmeal and hot chocolate, we started back up the Bright Angel Trail.

Hiking up was a whole lot slower than coming down. My brother and I were down to our last two pairs of dry socks. Our feet were wet shortly into the trip. Then my dad and mom got a great idea. We would put on our last pair of dry socks, cover them with our ziplock freezer bags and put our feet into our boots. This worked great and we managed to keep our feet dry until we reached the top of the rim. By this time it was dark. We found a room in the lodge where we could stay the night. My brother and I sat by the fire and drank hot chocolate while our parents took all the wet stuff to the laundromat to get it dry. We felt lucky to be in a warm place. We slept very well.

The next morning we packed up the car and started the five hour trip home. At that time I was eight years old. Now that I am ten, I can look back and see how much fun it really was, and how cold it was too.

The following article, sent to us by its author, was reprinted from College Teaching, Vol. 38/No. 3, pp. 83-7: *Teaching the Whole Person:*

CARITAS IN THE CLASSROOM
The Opening of the American Student's Heart
by John D. Lawry

John D. Lawry is a professor of psychology at Marymount College in Tarrytown, New York. This article is based on a presentation at the annual meeting of The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C., February, 1989.

Editors' Note. Due to the unusual ideas and point of view expressed in this article, College Teaching *has asked Dr. Lawry to respond to some questions that were raised by the reviewers of the manuscript. These responses were at the end of the original article, but have been put first by ΣΚΟΛΗ, representing as they do, in our opinion, the purest expression of the author's heart!*

Interview with John Lawry:

CT: When you described what happened when you asked your class to "check in" with their feelings and experiences at the beginning of the term—how did you get them to feel this open on the first day in a class of strangers?

JL: First of all, the class was not entirely a group of "strangers." Marymount College, Tarrytown, is a relatively small, residential women's college of around 800 students. Most of the students know each other by face if not by name, with the exception of freshmen. Classes are rarely larger than twenty-five, and somewhere around sixteen to seventeen is the average class size. This particular class had approximately fifteen students enrolled on the first day though it jumped to the limit of twenty-five by the end of the dropadd period. Also, because it is a women's college, there is more friendliness in the classroom or at least less guardedness than I see in typical coed classrooms. It tends to be a very caring environment unlike the usual competitiveness that is more typical.

Secondly, I begin my classes in a rather unusual way. We chant "OM." Then I greet the students with the Sanskrit, "Jai Bhagwan," which translates into something like, "I honor the divine within you," and the students are requested to return the greeting. At the beginning they humor me in this, but, after awhile, they get into it. In fact, if I should forget, they will remind me that we forgot to chant "OM." It may sound weird, but something begins to happen as a result that is very special.

... I think I communicate a certain permission, non-verbally, to the students to be who they really are. In spite of this, I must confess that I was shocked and surprised at their utter candor and the extent of their pain.

Thirdly, you must realize that like any other professor at a small college I have a certain reputation, and so the class is self-selected on the basis of the teacher and the course, "Religion and Psychology," which is an elective. It's hard to know what your reputation is, but I think mine contributes to a certain trust in the classroom. As a result of my own spiritual journey, I am much more comfortable with myself, including my shadow self, and therefore I think I communicate a certain permission, non-verbally, to the students to be who they really are. In spite of this, I must confess that I was shocked and surprised at their utter candor and the extent of their pain. I have never had a class quite like that before. The only explanation I can give is what I call "grace." That class was graced!

CT: But isn't there some slight risk of too much "confession" tumbling out and the other students not knowing how to handle it or some students being too vulnerable to handle it?

... I see a lot of woundedness in our young people today. ...

JL: I suppose that's always possible, but, in that particular class, all I can tell you is that it worked in just the opposite fashion. The more transparent we all became with each other, the better and more powerful the learning. Remember that this was a course in religion and psychology, and I had made a very fortunate choice of texts in Peck's *The Road Less Traveled*. To keep it abstract and theoretical would have been a grave mistake in my judgment. Once you invite students to be themselves, you have to accept what comes. I do not think that these students were atypical. I see a lot of woundedness in our young people today. I was moved by that quote from Bernadette Roberts and have taken it as a challenge that, hopefully, none of my students can say that they have not been changed by my courses. The fact is that my students have reported that they have been changed profoundly as exemplified by Erica and Josephine.

I know some people may feel I am getting close to therapy, but I prefer to think of it as teaching the whole person. Peter Drucker put it well in *Time* magazine (January 22, 1990, 6) recently: "We should know that the old approach to education is theoretical and unsound. We still believe that teaching and learning are two sides of the same coin, but we ought to realize that they are not: one learns a subject, *and one teaches a person* (emphasis mine)." There is an important difference between thinking of myself as a teacher of students rather than as a teacher of psychology.

CT: Early on, you mention "developing some ways" for "creating a classroom where love, caring, and cooperation are the predominant themes in place of fear and competition." Can you elaborate on these ways?

JL: The answer is really another article that I am working on, but, briefly, I try to do what Belenky, et al. have called, "connected teaching" in their book, *Women's Ways of Knowing*. "The connected class provides a culture for growth, as Peter Elbow says in *Writing Without Teachers;* it's a "'yoghurt' class, as opposed to a 'movie' class (in which students are spectators)." I have discussion classes rather than lecture. The students take turns leading the discussions and, therefore, take more responsibility for their own learning and have more opportunity for finding their own "voice." I also require the students to keep journals, which I read at the end of the term, comment on, and return. Basically, I try to be more of a coach and less of a referee or judge, though I know I must be both.

That's part of the answer. But the real secret, I think, is

"It is not so much what we say nor even what we do that speaks loudest to our students; it is who we are."

contained in Guardini's remark that I quoted: "It is not so much what we say nor even what we do that speaks loudest to our students; it is who we are." That was the real message for me in the movie, *Stand and Deliver*. Jaime Escalante was not only a genius at teaching high school math, but he also loved those kids and they knew it. Apparently, my persona is such that the students do not have to be afraid, and, therefore, the natural love and caring that we all want and *have* deep down are allowed to surface. My favorite comment from a student in the course evaluations at the end of that class was: "Dr. Lawry is about as old as us teenagers. He relates really well." I'm 52, and I bless the student who wrote that!

Here follows the article itself:

> ***... American higher education has focused on the eye of the mind to the virtual neglect of the eye of the heart.***

If Allan Bloom (1987) is right, that there has been a gradual closing of the American mind, then I believe it is due to the closing of the American heart. Indeed, the more I listen to college students, the more I come to realize that American higher education has focused on the eye of the mind to the virtual neglect of the eye of the heart. This has resulted in a kind of moral astigmatism and spiritual blindness. To quote Bernadette Roberts (1985, 153): "After two years at the university, I suddenly realized I had not learned a thing. Despite the influx of information, nothing really happened. I was the same person with the same mind—I had not grown at all. If learning could not bring about change, if it was not a way of growth, then the university was a waste of time."

More and more I have come to realize that the quality of the relationship between student and teacher is critical in opening the heart as well as the mind. Though there is little empirical evidence, I believe the highest form of learning occurs when the teacher loves and accepts the students so fully that they feel safe enough to go within to see themselves and to emerge with new answers about themselves and their lives. As Parker Palmer (1983, 69) asserts: "To teach is to create a space in which obedience to truth is practiced." Similarly, Goethe said in the last century that it was not the most brilliant teachers who had the greatest influence on him, but those who loved him the most.

The Research

There are few authorities in my field of educational psychology who have written about the place of love in the classroom, with the exception of Leo Buscaglia and the recently deceased Carl Rogers. In a little-known study published more than a decade ago, Aspy and Roebuck (1974) found that what Carl Rogers calls empathy, congruence (psychological integrity), and positive regard, as measurable characteristics in grade-school teachers, contribute significantly to classroom learning. In other words, teachers who measure high in empathy, congruence, and positive regard produce students who score higher on standard tests than do teachers who measure low. Moreover, the students of the teachers with empathy had better student attendance rates and fewer students with school phobia. Aspy and Roebuck (1977) published their updated research with the telling title, *Kids Don't Learn From People They Don't Like*, and, they might have added were it not a tautology, kids don't learn from people who don't like them.

More recently, three educators at the University of Utah's medical school, Whitman, Spendlove, and Clark, (1986) have published an ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, *Increasing Student Learning*, arguing that professors should become "professionally intimate" with undergraduates to minimize student stress. The authors observed that "When students feel that the professor *cares* [emphasis mine] not only about their progress in class but also about their academic progress in general and [about] them as people, they are more likely to feel a collegial relationship with the teacher and adopt the teacher as a role model" (p. 15). Furthermore, "Teachers should consider sharing their thoughts and values in a manner that encourages students to disclose theirs" and commit themselves to "personal growth for all students" (p. 34-45).

Anthropologists tell us that this tradition of ignoring the emotional connection between student and teacher is peculiar to the West. In his brilliant analysis of the human life cycle as experienced in different cultures, Colin Turnbull (1983) contrasts British attitudes and educational practices with those of small, "primitive" societies like the Mbuti and the Ituri Forest people of central Africa. Every teacher of adolescents should read it.

It took me twenty years of college teaching to allow myself to see the fear on the faces of my students.

The chapter on adolescence, "The Art of Transformation," emphasizes how little our education has to do with the spiritual and how that neglect fragments our understanding of the world and our place in it. In contrast, all of Mbuti education involves the spirit and the heart. There is one particularly telling account in which Turnbull informs the Ituri Forest people elders that it is the students, not the teachers, who control the rites of passage ordeals in Western society. "Did you have no teachers?" they asked. Then when I told them that our teachers were not kinsmen or friends, or even known to our families, and that they only taught our minds and trained our bodies in sports and games and didn't teach our hearts or spirit, they understood, I think, why we seem as cold to them as we do." (p. 105).

In Western education the exception, of course, is the enviable relationship between student and coach. Who can forget Greg Louganis' tear-filled victory embrace of his coach, Ron O'Brien, in the 1988 Olympics? How infrequently we teachers hug our students who are beyond the 4th grade!

But objectivism, this schizophrenic split between mind and heart, does not have to be the case in the college classroom. As Palmer (1983) reminds us in the last chapter, "The Spiritual Formation of Teachers," of his little-known book: "The transformation of teaching must begin in the transformed heart of the teacher" (p. 107). My own personal journey has been to explore the implications of creating a classroom where love, caring, and cooperation are the predominant themes in place of fear and competition and to develop some ways for doing so. Though I have tinkered with strategies and syllabi, I keep coming back to myself and the words of the Roman Catholic theologian, Romano Guardini: "It is not so much what we say *nor even* what we do that speaks loudest to our students; it is who we are."

Religion and Psychology and Trust

On the first day of my Religion and Psychology class (a new course for me) in the fall of 1988, I asked the class to "check in" with "where they were" at the beginning of the term. The drama of human joy and brokenness began to tumble from their lips. One student shared her triumph over drug addiction. Another revealed a broken heart and questioned the purpose of her young life. A freshman spoke of her dreams and excitement at finally making it to her first college class.

And then it was my turn. Because my students had bared their souls, I was challenged to do likewise. I told them about my recent engagement to be married to a woman with whom I had been living for ten years. Two and-a-half weeks before the wedding, she informed me that she could not go through with it. I talked about my shock and disappointment, my heartbreak and slow recovery. There was a reverent silence in the room. Apparently, no teacher had ever shared like that before. I remembered the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. 13:12): "The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known."

The ice was broken, and we were not afraid of each other. (It took me twenty years of college teaching to allow myself to see the fear on the faces of my students.) There was an atmosphere of trust and compassion in the classroom. There was also cooperation. Students gratuitously shared books, which was necessary because of an unexpected shortage. Indeed, the students learned about religion and psychology and the relationship between them. I could see it and hear it. And most of all, they learned about themselves.

It is no coincidence that articles on collaborative learning—cooperation as opposed to competition—have begun to proliferate. As Kohn (1987, 53) reported, "Students who learn cooperatively not only learn better, but feel better about themselves and get along better with each other."

Students' Responses

How did the students react to this course? One of the requirements was a self-evaluation submitted at the end of the semester. I would like to quote from two of the students in an attempt to answer the question. The evaluations I have chosen are typical of the class's reactions except that the chosen two were among the more articulate.

> *Dear Dr. Lawry,*
>
> *Or rather, if I may, "Dear Friend." Although this course required me to do a lot of one of the two things that I dislike doing most, I believe that I have done nothing but benefit from the read*

ings. This course allowed me to return to my true self. It has allowed me to shed all my masks and let people see the naked me. Fortunately, I have found that I do have emotions and that I am somewhat of a warm person.

At first, when I wrote to 'Dear Friend' in my journal, I knew that I was referring to myself. But I was referring to myself in a negative way. I referred to myself because I was new here. I did not really know anyone. At that point, everyone was just an acquaintance. Also, I was determined to remain an island. The repercussions of being part of a friendship are too painful. 'Friend' was just another word for me.

Later on, I came to realize that 'Dear Friend' meant much more than it did in the beginning. It dawned on me, after many a forced reading, that I am my best friend. This is where I must begin. I must understand that before I can even begin to be someone's friend, I must accept that I am my best friend.

Finally, I accepted that not only was I writing to my best friend, but I was accepting that the stranger who was going to read my journal had mystically become my friend. He was just my teacher at first, but he became much more.

You magically turned a room full of virtual strangers into a family of friends. We all knew that we had the potential of being friends. But you helped to take it one step further. Although we may not know everyone's name, we know that forever how short a time, we were a family. We cried together. We laughed together. We trusted each other. And, most importantly, we loved each other.

This time will have been a precious one for me. I have learned a lot about myself and hope to continue to do so. Most importantly, I have learned that I am truly my best friend.

Thank you,
Josephine

P.S. The other thing that I hate doing most is writing.

Dear Dr. Lawry,

I want to start my evaluation by thanking you for this course. I feel I have been "healed" and have grown from the knowledge I have gained in this class.

The atmosphere of trust in the class had a really profound effect on me. I felt as though there were a bond linking all those present. It was as if we were all sharing some sort of positive awakening, and we were all able to feel the growth taking place within us *as individuals and amongst us as a group.*

I felt comfortable enough to speak openly and emotionally. I remember the way I used to speak to my psychotherapist. I would intellectualize my feelings and thus distance myself from them. I would merely describe how I felt; I would never actually speak what I felt inside- I never spoke "from the heart." I did not have to do that in this class. I was able to reveal my true feelings without having to put up barriers. I was able to reveal all the emotions I experienced during the semester.

I have been honest with myself for the first time in my life. This has undoubtedly had a therapeutic effect on me. I could feel my self-esteem growing as we progressed through the course. I was able to purge my brain of so many negative thoughts. Rather than analyzing my belief system to get at the root of my problems I learned to release the negative energy of my problems and allow myself to forgive....

One of the most enriching aspects of this course was, for me, the emphasis on spirituality. I have, for the most of my life, felt as though there was a void within me. I have tried to fill the space with food, alcohol, and love (what I used to think was love). But I was never able to rid myself of my emptiness. I think I was spiritually starved. I have learned that the void can only be filled from within, with the love of God that we all possess within us.

Guidance is a very new concept for me. I used to think that things happened in a person's lifetime with little if any help from God. I think I was wrong to view things so secularly. I am positive now that God is leading me on a certain path and that He is providing me with "grace" or gifts to aid my spiritual growth. I think it was God's grace that led me to this school. It is as though He intended for me to come to this place so I could attend this class. I hope that doesn't sound corny. But the things I've learned in this course have helped me or will help me grow spiritually. I've never had a class like this. I don't really even consider this a class, I feel as though I embarked on a spiritual retreat this semester.

Thank you,
Erica

I never had a class like this either. I don't know if I ever will again. I do know that I have become a different teacher and that it is time to challenge Bloom's (1987, 21) contention that "book learning is most of what a teacher can give."

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This book is a goldmine of empirical research testing the validity of Carl Rogers' educational theories. The authors document rather conclusively the critical importance of the student-teacher relationship in the learning process, although it is restricted to the pre-college level.

Belenky, M. F., B. M. Clinchy, N. R. Goldberger, J. M. Tarule. 1986. Women's ways of knowing. N.Y.: Basic Books. Bloom, A. 1987. *The closing of the American mind*. New York: Simon 8! Schuster. Elbow, Peter. 1973. Writing without teachers. N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

Greenleaf, R. 1979. *Teacher as servant*. New York: Paulist Press.

A fictional parable about a student residence at a large university that is dedicated to the teaching of "servant leadership," written by a very successful Quaker. "Professor Billings," housemaster and professor of physics, is a model of the caring teacher and servant leader *extraordinaire*. This book has been very important in the development of my own educational philosophy.

Kohn, A. 1987. "It's hard to get left out of a pair." *Psychology Today* 21(10):53-57.

Profiling Roger and David Johnson, pioneering researchers on cooperative education, Kohn reports that eighty original studies have led the Johnsons to the following conclusion: "Children who learn cooperatively—compared with those who learn competitively or independently—learn better, feel better about themselves and get along better with each other" (p. 53).

Palmer, P. 1983. *To know as we are known: A spirituality of education*. New York: Harper & Row.

If you only have time for one book on this list, this is the one you should read. More than any other, it has shaped my current educational philosophy and has given me the courage to become more transparent with my students. It also is the first book I know of that discusses the importance of "the spiritual formation of teachers."

Palmer, P. 1987. "Community, conflict, and ways of knowing." *Change,* 19(1):2–25.

In extractions from the speech that he delivered at the AAHE annual meeting in 1987 (and for which he received a standing ovation), Palmer bewails the lack of true community in most institutions of higher learning. Concluding that love is what makes community possible, he describes in essence "two ancient and honorable kinds of love. The first is love of learning itself.... And the second kind of love on which this community depends is love of learners, of those we see every day, who stumble and crumble, who wax hot and cold, who sometimes want truth and sometimes evade it at all costs, but who are in our care, and who—for their sake, ours, and the world's—deserve all the love that the community of teaching and learning has to offer" (p. 25).

Roberts, B. 1985. *The path to no-self.* Boston: Shambhala.

Turnbull, C. 1983. *The human cycle.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Turnbull, an anthropologist, contrasts British attitudes and rearing practices with those of a small, "primitive," society, the Mbuti. The chapter on adolescence emphasizes how little our education has to do with the spiritual and how that fragments our understanding of the world and our place in it. In contrast, all of Mbuti education involves the spirit.

Whitman, N., D. Spendlove, and C. Clark. 1986. *Increasing students' learning: A faculty guide to reducing stress among students.* Washington, DC: ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4.

"The purpose of this report [was] to help college faculty increase students' learning by reducing stress among students" (p. iii). After surveying the literature, the authors concluded that "the frequency and quality of teachers' contact with students, inside and outside the classroom, affect students' involvement in their own learning. Positive teacher-student relations have been linked to students' satisfaction with college, their educational aspirations, and their academic achievement" (p. iv).

* * *

REVIEWS:
"THE EDUCATED HEART"

by Daniel Goleman
From *Common Boundary*,
November/December, 1995.

Reviewed by Ellen Becker

Common Boundary in its November/December 1995 issue ran an article called "The Educated Heart" by Daniel Goleman, a psychologist whose most recent book is called*Emotional Intelligence*. The article is about a pilot program in New Haven Connecticut public schools that "[i]n a direct challenge to much pedagogical orthodoxy...use[s] the tensions and traumas of children's emotional fabric of students' lives as the topic of the day." It goes on to say that "[th]is a radical departure: It puts in the foreground what is determinedly ignored in most American classrooms and relegated to trips to the principal's office for discipline, or for those too unruly, to 'special ed' classes." As I read this, it sounds wonderful. Finally someone in public schools is paying attention to *who* is in the classroom and what they are going through.

My own experience from sending my own children to an alternative school (Albany, New York's Free School) was shock when I began to get that the people in the school actually cared about *who* my children were, how they were doing and what their struggles were (and I'm not talking about academic; I'm talking about struggles to be a happy, balanced human being). From my own experience in public schools, that was the *last* thing I expected anyone to be concerned with. You just did your work, kept your nose clean and very few people paid any more attention.

However, as I've grown, the more I have reclaimed for myself what has meaning and the less I rely on the "curriculum" of others, the happier I am. Hence Goleman's article seemed to me to indicate a valuable turn in public school attention.

The article cites the sickening statistics about the trouble our children are in, the huge increases of violent crimes among young people, of pregnancies among young adolescents, of venereal diseases, and of drug addiction. The article's chief focus is on studies that show that children with specific "social and emotional deficits" in kindergarten and grade school are at risk of developing violent behavior, becoming pregnant early, becoming addicted to drugs, etc. These social and emotional skills which children increasingly lack are termed "basic competencies of the human heart," hence the title of the article, "The Educated Heart." Those competencies are described as "knowing what you are feeling, being able to manage those feelings well, being able to delay impulse, maintaining hope and optimism despite setbacks, empathizing and taking others' perspectives, handling emotions in relationships, and interacting harmoniously." Empathy and impulse control are two aspects that are singled out for a lot of discussion. Severely neglected or abused children, Goleman says, have no empathy and will respond to a crying playmate with anger and blows rather than sympathy and help. Impulsive children who are least able to delay gratification or tolerate frustration, says Goleman, are most likely to drift to criminal behavior as they grow up.

I was gratified to read a discussion of kids in trouble that looked at them with a caring eye, particularly those kids in the most trouble—and to trace where those trouble begin and what can be done to help. However, one thing the article overlooks is that children *come into* this world with enormous heart, perceptiveness, caring, and emotional strength. Down through history in our culture, the emotional responsiveness and intelligence of children, babies, infants, and newborns has been underestimated and even denied entirely, until eventually research comes along that discovers that yes, there is a responsive, intelligent being here and, like the story about the researcher who wishes to observe a monkey in a locked room and looks through the keyhole, yes, there is a brown eye looking through the keyhole back at the researcher, even though that brown eye may belong to a being that cannot yet express itself. I believe the same mistake is being made here in "The Educated Heart," though to a lesser degree. These children know and understand a lot more than they are being given credit for.

However, there is a second thing that is overlooked here and that is the effect of the school itself on the emotional life of children. Traditionally, as the article notes, schools have had no room for the emotional life of children, but worse than that, schools have been observed to have a negative impact on the emotional life of children. George Dennison writes in his book *The Lives of Children*, that most children arrive for schooling with their sense of themselves pretty much intact. However, by the time they leave schools at age 18, very few still have that. John

Gatto finds that schools, either alone or in concert with the dominating influence of television, have an incredible negative impact on children. In fact, schools can and do produce the same behavior deficiencies—lack of empathy and impulsiveness—that Goleman talks about.

In Gatto's essay, "The Psychopathic School" contained in his book *Dumbing Us Down*, he says that the abstract and insane logic of the institutions of compulsory schooling itself overwhelms any contribution individual teachers can make. Gatto's analysis shows that out of the 168 hours of a week, children spend 56 hours sleeping, 55 hours in front of the television and 45 hours attending and going to and from school and doing homework. Their behavior during school hours is closely regulated. They are given no private time or space and are disciplined if they try to assert any individuality. The chief lesson they learn, despite the good intentions of individual teachers, is how to obey. They are confined to sit indoors with people of exactly the same age and class, cut off from the great diversity of adult life outside, moving from cell to cell at the sound of a gong without relation to what each might find interesting or absorbing, learning facts abstracted from their context and set in a form to be memorized and regurgitated rather than observed, played with, learned. The institution of schooling is psychopathic and it produces dependent, emotionally damaged children with poor ability to think and act for themselves. It is Gatto's observation after 25 years of teaching in public schools that they produce children who are:

Indifferent to the adult world
Without curiosity and lacking the ability to concentrate
With a poor sense of the future (poor impulse control?)
With no sense of the past and how it has led to the present (again poor impulse control?).
Cruel to each other, lacking compassion for misfortune, laughing at weakness and contemptuous of people whose needs show too plainly (talk about lack of empathy. Goleman says this is an attribute of only those children severely abused and neglected; Gatto finds this characteristic of the children he teaches)
Uneasy with intimacy or candor.
Materialistic
Dependent, passive and timid in the face of new challenges

The conclusion I draw from this is that the schools are looking, at least partially, at an "iatrogenic" disease in these increasing deficits of social skills they see in the children attending—that is, a disease caused by the institution itself in large part. The article fails to consider this and evinces the belief that public schools are a completely benign institution.

As for the methodology it discusses, although the article talks about the emotional life of kids and about bringing it into the classroom, the examples given indicate a belief that the children come to this arena with nothing and that the school must give it to them. This produces a subtle top down "we-know-what's-good-for-you" air to the exchanges shown between teachers and students. It is a very familiar atmosphere for anyone who has been in public school and in fact though the topic is emotions, the examples could be right out of a typical classroom exchange on any other topic, such as learning the alphabet or simple math problems.

Emotions are the medium of exchange between us all, children, adults, teachers, students, parents, everyone, all of us mammals, but there is missing in the discussion of this topic a sense of commonality among people. We're all wounded people whether we want to admit it or not. We all come with our weaknesses and strengths. So when we reach out to help troubled children, each of us, child and adult, comes to the discussion with something to share, something to learn and something to teach. We're all human beings and we're in this together. I think children are shortchanged when this awareness is missing.

The methods that the New Haven pilot program uses to teach children about their inner emotional life are a series of didactic exercises. Children are shown a video example of a conflict between two girls and how they "correctly" resolve it; they are taught to memorize the "correct" responses to questions about how to handle that conflict and to chant those responses in unison; they are told to cut out faces from magazines and then identify the feelings on that magazine face; they are taught to identify positive things to say about a person as warm fuzzies and negative things as cold pricklies.

Given that we are talking about emotions, you might think that examples would present themselves right there in the classroom, where children could identify feelings in themselves, or each other in the moment of a common experience. There might be the teacher modeling empathy by understanding how one of the children in her classroom feels right then and there. There might be an example of a real conflict in the classroom resolved by the students and teachers pooling their resources together. But there is none of that kind of personal, direct, actual relational exchange shown in the classroom as a result of this pilot program. The concern for the emotional lives of children as expressed here in the examples given, is purely in the abstract, not in the concrete and the effect of all these examples is subtly impersonal.

I think that this "instructional" approach to emotions may come out of a fear of loss of control in the classroom; maybe it comes out of a fear of losing the distinction between who is the teacher and who is the taught; but that distinction is a false one anyway. I believe that this instructional approach, when combined with the impersonal impact of the institution of schooling itself, is part of the emotional problem that children face when they come to school. It fails to acknowledge the wealth of information children bring to any discussion on feelings and conflicts and in discounting their contribution, creates part of the problem they must overcome.

The heart, according to Joseph Chilton Pearce, is an organ that has as much to do with our thinking and our decision-making as our brain. Goleman, in this article, starts out to recognize its importance in the lives of children, but as I see it, the heart connection between adults and children gets lost by the time Mr. Goleman's concern gets translated into a program for the classroom.

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THE ART OF EDUCATION,
Reclaiming Your Family, Community and Self
by Linda Dobson
Published by Home Education Press
Tonasket, WA 1995; $14.75 (paper)

Reviewed by Chris Mercogliano

As its numbers approach a million strong, the homeschool movement is beginning to have a far-reaching impact on American society, with *The Art of Education, Reclaiming Your Family, Community and Self* serving as a perfect example of how far it has come. In this provocative, humorous and unusual new book with a foreward by John Taylor Gatto, the author moves quickly to differentiate between the *business* and the *art* of education. To quote Linda Dobson, homeschooling parent, author and regular columnist for the nation's oldest and longest-running homeschooling journal, *Home Education Magazine:*

> ***When education is art, the journey is the education. This means that today—this very moment—is just as important as any other. Suddenly every step holds significance, not just the one that puts you over the line. It is as if, having driven the same route to the same destination for many years, you notice for the first time the flowers in the park, the smell of bakery bread in the air, squeals of delight from a ballgame in the distance. When every moment has meaning, your senses awaken, your mind opens, you're eager to proceed. Experiencing the journey allows the wanderer to reap a harvest of connection, of significance, of joy.***

Contrast that with her quote from William Torrey Harris, U.S. Commissioner of Public Education at the turn of the century: "Substantial education, scientifically defined, is the subsumption of the individual." With that, Dobson presents herself as a perceptive and well-informed spokeswoman for the ever-increasing number of families across the land who are refusing to be subsumed any longer. God bless them all.

Clearly this is a book whose time has come. Far from being another ideological polemic, its first chapter literally begins with the question, "Who are you?" The reason for such a question, the author so correctly points out, is that before anyone of us can hope to *resume* conscious control over our destinies, or certainly those of our children, we must first overcome the years of training we have received from the government controlled system of compulsory education in looking outside ourselves for confirmation of our identities. The author then spends the majority of the book examining the reality of where "the system" has led us to as human beings, and then how we might, if we so choose, free ourselves from the state of conformity, dependency and confusion especially with regard to raising children which has become a late-twentieth century cultural norm.

... by claiming responsibility for your own children and your mutual education, you can learn to be free in thought, word and deed in the privacy of your own environment.

Dobson sums this state of being up very concisely in a chapter called, "As You Sow So Shall You Reap" when she writes:

> ***Schools condition adults (parents) to raise capital instead of kids. Parents disconnect from kids. Schools take over even more parenting responsibilities. Parents disconnect further from kids. Schools call in social services to repair the trauma. Parents disconnect even further from kids. Schools do even more of what they already do. And then those children have children.***

And so, in *The Art of Education, Reclaiming Your Family, Community and Self* , Linda Dobson makes no bones about her anti-school bias. She believes that schools (and here I hope our own Free School and similar small, family-style schools would be seen as exceptions by her), by and large, are not good places for children; and furthermore as described above, they wear at the critically important bond between children and their families in a multitude of not always so obvious ways. In the center of the book, the author tells her own personal story of making the leap of faith into teaching her children at home, including the widespread positive changes which this single structural shift had on every member of the family.

Meanwhile, Dobson emphatically states that she does not see homeschooling as a panacea:

> ***Family centered education will not immediately correct***

> *politics as usual or cause the destructive patterns of the public schools that lead us away from freedom to cease. But by claiming responsibility for your own children and your mutual education, you can learn to be free in thought, word and deed in the privacy of your own environment.*

But, says Dobson, strong, functional, happy families are the key ingredient in any successful community, and without them this country will only continue to erode and decay. The beauty of the homeschool movement as I see it, is that in an almost totally leaderless fashion, it is successfully modeling this truth for us all.

According to co-publisher Helen Hegener, *The Art of Education* is receiving rave reviews and is about to go into its second printing. Without a doubt it makes important reading for homeschoolers and schoolers alike.

- - - - -

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Grades K-12

"DANGEROUS MINDS,"

a movie produced by Hollywood Pictures
based on the book *Dangerous Minds*
[previously published as *My Posse Don't Do Homework*]
by LouAnne Johnson,
St. Martin's Paperbacks, New York, 1993. $4.99

Reviewed by Connie Frisbee-Houde

Dangerous Minds is the story of LouAnne Johnson's journey into the life of a teacher. She began teaching by being hired, under circumstances, unbeknownst to her, by a desperate administrator who had just had the third teacher in a short span of time leave a class of mostly black and Hispanic kids who were bused into a white neighborhood school. Before she became a teacher, she spent nine years in military service where she became a Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. To teach this group of very frustrated, angry, out of control kids who felt that no one cared who they were or what they did, she had to learn how to balance her instincts, her love for kids, her military training and experience, and her teaching skills. This movie and book represent incidents in this process where she becomes a teacher who really loves her work and the kids she teaches. She learns to thrive on the individuality of her students and sees them as human beings. In the process of getting their attention and respect, she describes to her students why she became a teacher:

... I saw the fear the anger, the pain—the truth that the purple mohawks and gang colors were designed to camouflage.

> ***I chose to become a teacher because I didn't like what I read in the newspapers—students graduating from high schools and colleges who can't read or write, kids taking drugs and killing themselves," I continued. "And the newspapers tell me you kids can't read, you hate books, you can't use your own language, and you don't care. Well, I care. And I think you do too, or you wouldn't be here." I glanced around the room at those ancient eyes in adolescent faces. I saw the fear the anger, the pain—the truth that the purple mohawks and gang colors were designed to camouflage.***

> *"And please don't waste my time trying to convince me that you're bad," I said. "Bad kids don't go to school. Bad kids are in jail, in juvi hall, in reform schools, on the streets. They aren't sitting in high school."*
>
> *They weren't sure whether to buy it or not; I could see it in their expressions. Still, they were sitting down and they were not talking. I was on a roll.*
>
> *I will make each one of you a guarantee. You come to class every day and do the work I give you here, and you do your homework. And if you try, I will guarantee you will pass the course. There is nobody in this room who is stupid. You are all valuable human beings, which reminds me—I have only one rule in this class room and that rule is not negotiable: Respect yourself and everyone else in the room. If you can't respect yourself, you can't respect other people. And if you don't have any self-respect, you have a problem. We're going to fix that problem because every person has the right to his or her personal dignity.*

When I saw the movie and later read the book, Miss Johnson, as she was called, was only one step ahead of her students. She brought to the class who she was as a person. She dealt with people with respect and expected the same from her students. She tried some of the "normal" teaching techniques and lesson plans only to discover that she would be eaten alive...when she was real with the kids they responded in kind. In the same exchange where she is setting the ground-work for her teaching, she had the kids write on the board what they thought a good teacher was and what they thought a good student was. Then she used these lists to set the tone for the class.

> *You obviously know exactly how to be successful students, so I won't waste your time telling you how to behave or what to do. You just told me what you need to do. That's your job—to be effective students. And you told me my job. I'll do my best to do my job and I expect the same effort from you."*
>
> *As I completed my speech, the bell rang, but the students didn't jump out of their seats immediately. They sat, stunned, aware that they had just set some extremely high standards for themselves. They had been had. And I was hooked.*

Because of the heart and possibility I saw in this woman's true approach to teaching, I wanted all my friends to share in my excitement and see the movie. I knew the movie was based on a true story and I was curious to see if Hollywood had created a fantasy. One friend who has been teaching in a public school for over a decade and who often feels very discouraged, noted that she would like to watch the movie often because she found it an inspiration. It was a reminder to her of the possibilities that are present, despite all the difficulties in being a teacher, particularly those with the administration. LouAnne Johnson also experienced this sense of defeat by the system. One of my favorite exchanges from the book that addresses LouAnne's response to burnout is with Danny, a student who had been labeled by all the teachers as an absolute failure, a no good drug user who was a waste of time. He struck LouAnne as a very intelligent and troubled young man. She took a special interest in finding a way to reach this student and helped to turn him around when every one else had given up. He came back to see her when she was feeling very discouraged.

> *"How are you doing in school?"*
>
> *"Great!" Danny said, "I'm going to graduate with my class... So, how about you? You don't look like you feel too good."*
>
> *"I'm a little tired," I admitted.*
>
> *"Tired like sleepy or tired the other kind?" He always was a perceptive kid.*
>
> *"Tired like the other kind," I said. He seemed genuinely interested, so I told him about some of the problems I'd recently faced. "I don't know how much longer I can put up with the bureaucratic system. I love the kids, but I can't stand to see so many of them get lost in the shuffle."*
>
> *"You can't quit," Danny said, his face suddenly serious, "You were the only teacher I ever had who really cared about me. If it hadn't been for you, I'd still be taking drugs and messing up my life, and I bet there are a lot more kids like me that you helped. Please don't give up on us...Remember those quotations you have hanging on the wall all over your room, Miss Johnson?" I nodded. "I read them at least a hundred times," he said. "My favorite one says—If your only tool is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail. Maybe you should try a screwdriver this year. Whaddya say, Miss J.?" He winked, gave me a thumbs-up, and swaggered across the cinder track toward the parking lot.*
>
> *That's the trouble with kids. You teach them something and they turn around and use it on you.*

When I was preparing to write this review I looked for a particular section that I had intended to quote but which I had failed to mark. I found myself totally drawn into reading the book all over again because of this real woman's way of interacting in a profound, touching, maddening, joyous, humorous and very human way with her students. I finally did find the section I was looking for which refers to different learning styles. It made me think of my own schooling—if only someone had shared this with me when I was in school! I thought that this would be a great idea to pass on to teachers and students. So here it is:

> *Another thing I discuss with my students is learning styles: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. I give the same spelling test three ways—I spell each word three ways aloud and ask the students to select the correct spelling; I give them a worksheet with the words spelled on it and ask them to pick the correctly spelled words; and, finally, I dictate the words and ask the students to write them down. Students who do better on the first test are auditorially oriented; they process information best through hearing. Students who do better on the second test are visual; they learn by seeing. And the last group, the kinesthetic learners, need to learn by doing. The kinesthetic learners have the hardest time in school because many subjects don't lend themselves easily to active lessons.*
>
> *To make sure that we have correctly determined the students' learning preference, we do another exercise. Speaking quickly, I give detailed oral instructions to the class for folding a sheet of notebook paper into a specific shape, then see how many can follow the instructions without further help. Then I demonstrate a similar, but different, set of instructions, one instruction at a time, giving the next step only after they have performed the pervious one. Usually, students have a distinct preference for one style or another. Once they know their learning styles, the problem is to help them learn to articulate their needs to teachers who do not teach in that particular style.*
>
> *"What happens when you raise your hand and tell your math teacher that you don't get it?" I asked the kids.*
>
> *"They tell you the same thing again," someone invariably answers.*
>
> *"Exactly the same way?" I ask.*
>
> *"Yeah," the student says, "except sometimes they might talk slower."*
>
> *"Does that help you?"*

"No."

"Then, if you know you are a visual learner," I ask, "what could you ask the math teacher to do if you don't understand?"

"Ask him to draw me a picture?"

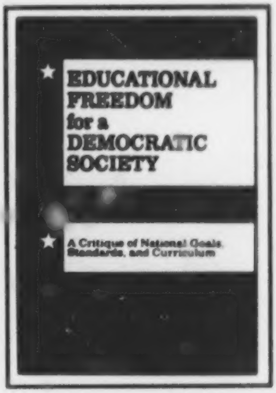
"Exactly. Tell him you learn better if you can see things in pictures and ask if he can draw you an example of what he's talking about. And if you're a kinesthetic learner, ask him if he can help you do a few examples yourself on your own paper, because you learn by doing."

Like her students, I liked the book better than the movie. Her class read *Taming of the Shrew* and then watched the Elizabeth Taylor movie version. They decided that they liked their own visual images better and it seemed more satisfying to them. I have two specific reasons for my preference of the book over the movie. First, I sometimes found Michelle Pfeiffer as LouAnne a distraction. At times she would whine and sound like a helpless little girl which did not seem to fit with her solid and sometimes aggressive manner of dealing with her students. I am not suggesting that her character needed to be strong at all times. Vulnerability does not need to be represented by childishness and does not appear in this form in the book.

Secondly, Hollywood also decided that the true story was not quite sensational enough so they added a particularly violent scene into one of the character's lives creating a situation that was not necessary to tell the story. They over-dramatized the real situation, creating a caricature of a troubled poor Hispanic youth which distracted from the true depth of LouAnne's relationships with her students. However because of the powerful message this movie contains I would rather that the story be out to the wider audience—the movie-going public—than not at all.

This movie gives a good look at where some of the real problems lie in our public schools—not primarily with the students or even the teachers, but with how both are treated by an uncaring administration with a lack of respect and humanness. As a result many teachers pass this frustration on to the students, treating them with very little compassion and understanding, seeing mainly problems, ethnic groups, bad attitudes and failures. There is a beauty in the power of love and dedication LouAnne Johnson showed her students that enabled her to see them as individuals. For some students profound healing took place in this very human one-by-one-by-one interaction.

A BOLD RESPONSE TO "GOALS 2000"
AND THE NATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION


EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM for a DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY
A Critique of National Goals, Standards, and Curriculum

The recent movement for national educational goals and standards represents a massive shift of educational authority from families and local communities to federal and state bureaucracies. Seeing children as "intellectual capital" in the national economy, this movement threatens educational freedom and democratic community life in America.

Educational Freedom for a Democratic Society offers sixteen critical perspectives on the national standards movement by major scholars in progressive and holistic education and leading homeschooling advocates. The book is edited by Ron Miller, the founding editor of *Holistic Education Review,* who has also written three important chapters.

To order *Educational Freedom for a Democratic Society* and receive a free copy of our catalog Great Ideas in Education—featuring over 75 other books and videos on democratic, person-centered education, write or call The Resource Center for Redesigning Education, P.O. Box 298, Brandon, Vermont 05733 • 1-800-639-4122

SECTION III: *The Lives Of Children:*

The following frightening article from* The New York Times (no date included)*was sent to us by one of our subscribers. It felt to me as though it belonged here in between Connie Frisbee Houde's review about a teacher who accepted children as they were instead of redefining them as displaying some syndrome or other—and the one that follows, which describes the way we in the Free School (in Albany, NY) view children and school. Routine use of Ritalin is evidently a common occurrence at a great many schools throughout the country. What are we coming to?

THE DEBILITATING MALADY CALLED BOYHOOD

by Natalie Angier

Until quite recently, the plain-spun tautology "boys will be boys" summed up everything parents needed to know about their Y-chromosome bundles. Boys will be very noisy—and obnoxious. Boys will tear around the house and break heirlooms. They will transform any object longer than it is wide into a laser weapon with eight settings from stun to vaporize. They will swagger and brag and fib and not do their homework and leave their dirty underwear on the bathroom floor.

> *There is now an attempt to pathologize what was once considered the normal range of behavior of boys*

But they will also be ... boys. They will be adventurous and brave. When they fall down they'll get up, give a cavalier spit to the side and try again. Tom Sawyer may have been a slob, a truant and a hedonist, he may have picked fights with strangers for no apparent reason; but he was also resourceful, spirited and deliciously clever. Huckleberry Finn was an illiterate outcast, but as a longterm rafting companion he had no peer.

Today, the world is no longer safe for boys. A boy being a shade too boyish risks finding himself under the scrutiny of parents, teachers, guidance counselors, child therapists—all of them on watch for the early glimmerings of a medical syndrome, a bona fide behavioral disorder. Does the boy disregard authority, make snide comments in class, push other kids around and play hooky? Maybe he has a conduct disorder. Is he fidgety, impulsive, disruptive, easily bored? Perhaps he is suffering from attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder or ADHD, the disease of the hour and the most frequently diagnosed behavioral disorder of childhood. Does he prefer computer games and goofing off to homework? He might have dyslexia or another learning disorder.

"There is now an attempt to pathologize what was once considered the normal range of behavior of boys," said Melvin Konner of the departments of anthropology and psychiatry at Emory University in Atlanta. "Today Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn surely would have been diagnosed with both conduct disorder and ADHD." And both, perhaps, would have been put on Ritalin, the drug of choice for treating attention-deficit disorder.

Lee Romero/The New York Times

BOY HAVING FUN OR A
CANDIDATE FOR RITALIN?

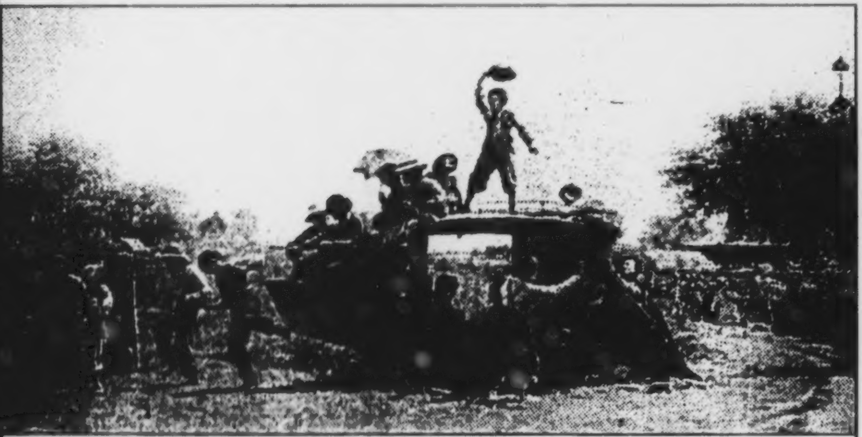
To be fair, many children do have genuine medical prob-

60

lems like ADHD, and they benefit enormously from the proper treatment. Psychiatrists insist that they work very carefully to distinguish between the merely rambunctious child, and the kid who has a serious, organic disorder that is disrupting his life and putting him at risk for all the demons of adulthood: drug addiction, shiftlessness, underemployment, criminality and the like.

It's a Boy Thing

At the same time, some doctors and social critics cannot help but notice that so many of the childhood syndromes now being diagnosed in record numbers affect far more boys than girls. Attention deficit disorder, said to afflict 5 percent of all children, is thought to be about three to four times more common in boys than girls. Dyslexia is thought to be about four times more prevalent in boys than girls; and boys practically have the patent on conduct disorders. What is more, most of the traits that brand a child as a potential syndromeur just happen to be traits associated with young males: aggression, rowdiness, restlessness, loud-mouthedness, rebelliousness.



Boys will be boys, even in an 1871 painting by Eastman Johnson.

None of these characteristics is exclusive to the male sex, of course—for the ultimate display of aggressive intensity, try watching a group of city girls engaged in a serious game of jump-rope—but boys more often will make a spectacle of themselves. And these days, the audience isn't smiling at the show.

Woe to the boy who combines misconduct with rotten grades; he is the likeliest of all to fall under professional observation.

"People are more sensitized to certain extremes of boyishness," said Dr. John Ratey, a psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School. "It's not as acceptable to be the class clown. You can't cut up. You won't be given slack any more." Woe to the boy who combines misconduct with rotten grades; he is the likeliest of all to fall under professional observation. "If rowdiness and lack of performance go together, you see the button being pushed much quicker than ever before," he said, particularly in schools where high academic performance is demanded.

Lest males of all ages feel unfairly picked upon, researchers point out that boys may be diagnosed with behavioral syndromes and disorders more often than girls for a very good reason: their brains may be more vulnerable. As a boy is developing in the womb, the male hormones released by his tiny testes accelerate the maturation of his brain, locking a lot of the wiring in place early on; a girl's hormonal bath keeps her brain supple far longer. The result is that the infant male brain is a bit less flexible, less able to repair itself after slight injury that might come for example, during the arduous trek down the birth canal. Hence, boys may well suffer disproportionately from behavioral disorders for reasons unrelated to cultural expectations.

British psychiatrists require a very severe form of hyperactivity before they'll see it as a problem

However, biological insights can only go so far in explaining why American boyhood is coming to be seen as a state of proto-disease. After all, the brains of boys in other countries also were exposed to testosterone in utero, yet non-American doctors are highly unlikely to diagnose a wild boy as having a conduct disorder or ADHD.

"British psychiatrists require a very severe form of hyperactivity before they'll see it as a problem," said Dr. Paul R.

McHugh, chairman and director of psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore. "Unless a child is so clearly disturbed that he goes at it until he falls asleep in an inappropriate place like a wastebasket or a drawer, and then wakes up and starts it all over again, he won't be put on medication." Partly as a result of this sharp difference in attitudes, the use of Ritalin-like medications has remained fairly stable in Britain, while pharmaceutical companies here have bumped up production by 250 percent since 1991.

Perhaps part of the reason why boyish behavior is suspect these days is Americans' obsessive fear of crime. "We're all really terrified of violence," said Dr. Edward Hallowell, a child psychiatrist at Harvard. "Groups of people who have trouble containing aggression come under suspicion." And what group has more trouble containing aggression than males under the age of 21? Such suspiciousness is not helped by the fact that the rate of violent crime has climbed most steeply among the young, and that everybody seems to own a gun or know where to steal one. Sure, it's perfectly, natural for boys to roll around in the dirt fighting and punching and kicking; but toss a firearm into the equation, and suddenly no level of aggression looks healthy.

> ***Because boys have a somewhat higher average metabolism than do girls, they are likely to become more fidgety when forced to sit still and study.***

Jokesters, Beware

Another cause for the intolerance of boyish behavior is the current school system. It is more group-oriented than ever before, leaving little room for the jokester, the tough, the tortured individualist. American children are said to be excessively coddled and undisciplined, yet in fact they spend less time than their European or Japanese counterparts at recess, where kids can burn off the manic energy they've stored up while trapped in the classroom. Because boys have a somewhat higher average metabolism than do girls, they are likely to become more fidgety when forced to sit still and study.

The climate is not likely to improve for the world's Sawyers or Finns or James Deans or any other excessively colorful and unruly specimens of boyhood. Charlotte Tomaino, a

Yup, a Ritalin candidate, for sure—
(almost everywhere butThe Free School—
and other alternative schools)

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clinical neuropsychologist in White Plains, notes that the road to success in this life has gotten increasingly narrow in recent years. "The person who used to have greater latitude in doing one thing and moving onto another suddenly is the person who can hold a job," she said. "We define success as what you produce, how well you compete, how well you keep up with the tremendous cognitive, and technical demands put upon you." The person who will thrive is not the restless version of a human tectonic plate, but the one who can sit still, concentrate and do his job for the 10, 12, 14 hours a day required.

A generation or two ago, a guy with a learning disability—or an ornery temperament—could drop out of school, pick up a trade and become, say, the best, bridge builder in town. Now, if a guy cannot at the very least manage to finish college, the surging, roaring, indifferent Mississippi of the world's economy is likely to take his little raft, and break it into bits.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Read what one of our reviewers says about
The Journal of Family Life

From: ***New Age Journal's Sourcebook for 1996:***

THE EDITORS of
The Journal of Family Life: A Quarterly for Empowering Families
know that family life embraces a whole range of emotions and relationships from birth to death. Each 64-page issue focuses on a theme related to family life—couples, children, grandparents, in-laws, culture, spirituality, money. Although interviews with the likes of *Soul* man Thomas Moore, midwife Ina May Gaskin, and educator John Taylor Gatto spice up the mix, most of the articles are written by regular people sharing their thoughts and experiences. Reading this grassroots *Journal*—which is dedicated to the idea that social change starts with family change—is a bit like having a conversation with wise and interesting neighbors, who admit both their failures and their successes in hopes of lending a helping hand.

72 Philip St., Albany NY 12202; (518) 432-1578. Quarterly; $20/year; a sustaining subscription ($30) includes a year's free subscription to *ΣKOΛE*.

We are delighted to include the introduction to Chris Mercogliano's about-to-be published book:

MAKING IT UP AS WE GO ALONG
by Chris Mercogliano

INTRODUCTION:

This is the story of a school. Or more precisely, this is a collection of stories about the lives of certain children and adults who have assembled together under the guise of the artificial construct commonly known as "school." It is also the story of their interaction with the immense ground beyond school—with family, neighborhood, city, nation, race, class, and culture. For no school is an island, though so many try so hard to be. This is also the story of the author, who calls himself, "teacher." So already you see that we have a story within a story within a story.

Consider the following. Several years ago, New York's state-wide children's theater group was in grave danger of losing its funding, all of which came from the state legislature. Now, it just so happens that other Free School teachers and I had been taking children to the majority of the group's productions ever since they had opened with *Peter Pan* ten years previously. A few of our students had even participated in their excellent program at one time or another. It was at the end of one of the plays we were attending that the audience was informed by the troupe that the theater would be shutting down at the end of the season if their funds were not restored immediately. Returning from the theater, I overheard some of our older kids (ages eight through twelve) talking about how upset they were about the loss of what they very much considered to be *their* theater.

Equally upset (having witnessed year after year the incredibly positive impact which this kind of live theater had on kids), I asked them if there were anything they thought they themselves could do about the problem. Four girls expressed a determination to at least try something, which led to a discussion of potential strategies. One girl suggested writing to the governor; another thought we should make signs and demonstrate in front of the state Capitol; still another thought of contacting kids from other schools and asking them to write letters in support of the children's theater. All excellent ideas; but I explained to them that there was very little time and also that it was actually the legislature who had the final say on the theater's funding—that the governor probably knew nothing about the issue—and since the current legislative session was nearly over, it was an excellent time to talk to individual legislators in person.

The girls liked that idea, which was also a very practical one since the legislative office building is only about ten blocks from our school. They asked me to be their appointment secretary; and so before I made any calls, together we figured out which key legislators to target. I then made one final suggestion: that the girls might let the press know about their intentions because a news story would surely bring further support for their cause. They loved this idea, too (most kids that age are natural hams and love the limelight), and asked me to serve as their press agent as well.

What followed were successful meetings with several influential legislators. I stopped attending after the first one, because the man seemed incapable of believing that these kids had anything intelligent to say and over and over would only address his remarks to me. Rather than confront him about this and risk alienating him, we just let it slide and then regrouped before the next appointment, which a local newspaper reporter was slated to cover.

Though we hadn't anticipated it, the newsman was immediately impressed as he watched the girls file into the legislator's office, leaving me behind in the waiting room. (I also noticed a look of profound dismay on the elected official's face when I didn't get up and follow them in.) The reporter later interviewed the four intrepid activists back at school; and lo and behold, the following Monday morning, every member of the New York State Legislature arrived at work to find on their desks a copy of the Albany *Times Union* with a front page headline which read: "Students Fight to Save New York State Theater Institute".

To make a very long story short, thanks to the girls' and my actions (and to the efforts of thousands of other concerned citizens across the state), ultimately enough of the theater group's funding was restored to enable them to keep their doors open. I could happily end the story here and leave you with the (very accurate) moral that kids can indeed make a difference even in today's supposedly complex world; but then you would be missing real the point of this book (the story within the story). To accomplish that, I must include two postscripts.

The aforementioned reporter's front page story was absolutely brilliant, except for one not-so-small detail. I had brought a copy of the paper to school that morning and left it for the girls to read about themselves while I went to make coffee. When I returned, three of the girls were elated; but the fourth, Eliza, was totally bummed out—about what I could not imagine. When I asked her what was wrong, she showed me one of the story's opening paragraphs. The problem was all too obvious. Our reporter, trying to play the David and Goliath angle to the hilt, had set the scene by describing the four girls sitting in the legislator's big leather chairs—especially noting how one girl's feet dangled short of the floor.

The operative word here was short, and this was where the story stopped as far as Eliza was concerned. The subject of physical size had become a very sensitive and sore one in this diminutive ten-year-old's life. So, I listened to her tell me how hurt her feelings were and why; and then I asked her if it would help at all to share her reaction with the unknowing reporter. She thought about it a moment and said that it would; but asked if I would tell him for her. I agreed and called him immediately.

The most important piece is still to come. Two days later, Eliza received a letter at the school. It was from the reporter, who clearly had written it as soon as he had finished talking on the phone with me. He wrote that he felt especially bad about having focused on her small stature because as a child he, too, had always felt embarrassed about being shorter than the other kids his age. After completely acknowledging the injury he inadvertently had caused her, he said that his reason for mentioning her size in the story was that he wanted his readers to be as blown away as he was by the hugeness of what she was doing. She was, he concluded, a giant in his eyes, and no doubt in the eyes of many of his readers.

After school, Eliza took the letter straight to her father's workshop (where he builds wooden boats) and together they made a beautiful frame for it. The letter now hangs proudly on a wall in Eliza's bedroom.

The second postscript unfolded a couple of days after the first. A *Times Union* columnist—the word "curmudgeon" must have been invented for this prickly old newsman—picked up on the story of the girls' lobbying efforts and attacked me and the school for "using the girls as puppets" in what he saw as a blatantly adult political cause. Under the heading, "Crusaders

Exploit Children," he wrote that I, as their teacher, had no business manipulating them in order to pull on the heart strings of the public and the powers that be. Children should be left alone to be children, he argued, for they would soon have plenty of time as adults to bear the world's burdens.

Needless to say, the girls and I, along with the rest of the school, were enraged by the (also front page) column, which happened to enjoy an enormous following. I volunteered to write a (lengthy) response, which the newspaper appropriately elected to print in its entirety on the Sunday edition Op-ed page, adding to it the title (again appropriately), "When Children Aren't Pawns." You get the idea, I think.

Skipping right to the end (to the story within the story within the story), about a week after the dust had settled on this particular mini-drama, I received a letter from the father of a student who had moved on from the school a number of years before. The letter is brief enough, I think, to include in its entirety:

> *Dear Chris,*
>
> *I just read your article in the newspaper today discussing the issues Ralph Martin raised concerning the "use" of children in lobbying, protesting, etc. I would like you to know that I am in full agreement with your assertions and would like to thank you for your efforts.*
>
> *Reading your thoughts in the paper brought me back to the days that my daughter Tiffany had the great fortune of attending the Free School. Your article is a reflection of the attention, commitment and understanding that is so needed by the children of today's world.*
>
> *Tiffany's transition to the public school system [it was her choice to switch to the school nearer to her small town home] has been a great success. She has been maintaining superior grades every year. More importantly though, she has been self-motivated, secure and working to her potential. Her teachers report that she is a wonderful student who participates positively in class.*
>
> *There are times in everyone's life when perhaps we have doubts and insecurities as to what we are doing. Is it worth it? Am I doing it the right way? What does this mean in the end? I would like to take this opportunity to let the people at the Free School know that your work is invaluable, appreciated and the effects generated by your endeavors are as a pebble cast*

into still water. The ripples go on in ways you will never know. Thank you so much and continue the great work.

Sincerely,
Laurence Thompson

As I hope you can already see, this book will be a very personal and intimate telling of the Free School's story because it is a very personal and intimate place. Nowhere will you find a single, soup-to-nuts description of the school, for that would be inconsistent with our way of being, which tends to be too free-forming and spontaneous to adequately capture with any linear series of descriptive statements.

I used to give long-winded, carefully crafted answers to the frequently asked question, "What is your school's structure?" Until one day when I suddenly realized that the "structure" of our little school in inner-city Albany, New York, is simply the ever-changing people who make it up. No more, no less. It simply *is* the community of individuals (and here I mean community in the very strictest sense of the word, because as you will see in the first chapter, we are actually a community within a community) who each day choose to participate in its unfolding. And the school exists to be a medium for their growth—the adults just as much as the littler people. In other words, the Free School is a living context—not a structure, technique or philosophy.

Thirty years ago, the late George Dennison and his wife, Mabel, helped to start a short-lived school on New York City's Lower East Side called the First Street School. It was a radical experiment at the time because of the way it set out to practice real freedom and autonomy with ghetto children, many of whom were emotionally damaged. There, school was conceived of not merely as a place of instruction, but also as a comprehensively supportive environment geared to fostering growth in every human dimension. They believed—and rightly so—the field of relationships between all those involved in the school to be the locus of all real learning.

This meant that the First Street School was a passionate place, where the experience of love and deep caring—including conflict, anger and even hatred—were considered primary. The Dennisons intuited then what is becoming accepted scientific truth now, namely, that the heart is literally—and no longer only metaphorically—a central organ of intelligence, rivaling the brain

Eloquent Chris, above, morning meeting, below

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in importance. When our founder, Mary Leue, started the Free School in 1969, the First Street School was one of her models; and so I think you will find as you read on that we, too, place the needs of the heart before all others.

One of our watchwords at the Free School, which hopefully will remain mine throughout this book is this: keep it simple. Consider the following paradox. The more data we gather about the human organism, the more we realize how extraordinarily complex it is; and at the same time, the more we come to know how greased the wheels are for growth and development, and how automatically they occur—unless some unnatural event interrupts the process.

Our systems of conventional schools, both public and private, with all of their fear- and control-driven practices, have consistently failed to take into account the fact that human children—and all animal young, for that matter—are inexorably programmed to learn. Meanwhile, one of our primary goals at the Free School has always been to try to debunk the incredible mystique which has grown up around the basic human functions of learning and teaching, and to model simplicity and real success for anyone interested in another way of going about this business we call "school."

And so, one important reason for writing this book is to give testimony to the remarkable possibilities which abound when you assemble approximately forty-five children and eight adults under one roof in an atmosphere of freedom, personal responsibility, and mutual respect and support. The notion that education requires lots of money (the Free School's per-pupil expenditure is about about one-fourth of the state-wide average) and sophisticated technology (we do very well with a few used microscopes and six hand-me-down Apple computers), or that teachers require extensive specialized training, or that learning to read and write—to become expressive and articulate—depends upon highly refined teaching and assessment methodologies—this is all the stuff of a modern-day myth.

You will find this book at times light-hearted and silly because it deals with the lives of young children, who, thank God, prefer life that way. At other times, you will find it dead-serious and filled with outrage because it also attempts to address certain issues which ultimately are life-and-death ones—the foremost being the fact that we have created a society which is carelessly throwing away so many young lives, sometimes with covert intent.

You will also find this book filled with my many personal biases. For instance, I am a rabid gardener—and a strictly organic one at that. While I will do my best to resist the ever-present temptation to turn everything into a garden metaphor, you should know that my outlook is permanently infected by the organic gardener's creed: always plant good seed and strong seedlings; maintain rich, healthy soil; make sure that everything gets enough air, water, and sunshine; talk or sing to your plants often; and otherwise relax, observe carefully, and intervene as little as possible because the final outcome is beyond your personal control.

I am also a Reichian, which means that I once extensively studied the theories and research of the late Wilhelm Reich, a student of the "father" of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, while at the same time undergoing several years of the kind of intensive body-oriented therapy and analysis that he developed over the course of his career. Reich distinguished (and ultimately extinguished) himself by carrying Freud's focus on sexuality as the primary determinant of human mental and emotional health to the outer limits of acceptability. Throughout his career, one of Reich's primary concerns remained the prevention of excessive unhappiness (neurosis) by formulating a model of healthy rather than pathological psychological development, with an unrepressed adolescent sexuality considered to be a key ingredient. He also coined the term "self-regulation" in order to underscore the importance of enabling children to learn to recognize and meet their own needs and to set their own internal limits. Reich's concern with children led to a life-long friendship and collaboration with the Englishman A.S. Neill, founder of Summerhill, which soon became a model for a number of similar freedom-based schools around the world.

Somewhat more recently, I have come to be influenced by the immense work of another of Freud's students, (the also late) Carl Jung. From Jung, I learned the value of examining life in terms of its archetypal and mythological dimensions. Jung's life and work stand as an indelible testament to the importance of considering the primary task of one's passage through this lifetime to be the creation of one's own personal myth.

While anything but an anti-intellectual, but having pursued a thorough post-high school education largely outside of any college classroom, I now find myself with a fairly strong antiacademic bias. Over the years, I have had little need for the academic world, filled as it is with symbiotic artificiality and self-serving trade lingo. Instead, my vision of education is grounded in living experience and is steeped with a personal faith that life inevitably creates its own lessons for us all. As Ivan Illich warned decades ago, modern society appears to have hatched a conspiracy to deny most young people access to the secrets of the adult world, and it is going to take a concerted and conscious effort on all of our parts to turn this insidious progression around. Only in so doing will we stop mass-producing dependent people.

And so, I have undertaken this project with three broad goals in mind: to give a fairly detailed history of the Free School, including a brief analysis of its place in the grander scheme of things; to describe our school in a way that is meaningful both to those who have some point of reference to "alternative education" and to those who do not; and finally, to address certain fundamental subjects—aggression, sexuality, race/class, and God—four primary colors of human experience which have attained a nearly taboo status today and are all too often relegated to the rusty side spurs of our national thinking about children.

In the pages that follow, I hardly expect to have the last word on any of the issues I have raised. Instead, this book will be my attempt to provoke the questioning of certain entrenched perspectives as I weave my personal outlook together with some of the highlights of the Free School's quarter century-plus existence on one far edge of the educational spectrum.

Let me conclude by saying that I have tried to write this book with no specific audience in mind. It is my profound hope that it will be of value to parents (or prospective parents), to all who are engaged in the particularly human game called "teaching" (or who are considering such a move), to individuals or groups thinking about starting a school of their own (or about enabling their children's "education" to unfold at home)—or really to anyone concerned with the growth of healthy, whole children as we approach the twenty-first century at break-neck speed.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

REVIEWS:

THE TROUBLE WITH BOYS

A wise and sympathetic guide to
the risky business of raising sons
by Angela Phillips
published by Basic Books
New York, N.Y., 1994 $23.00 (hardcover)

Reviewed by Frank Houde

As I read through the first two dozen pages of this book I found myself saying internally, "Well, there's some good stuff here, but this is hardly undying prose. It's more like a research paper full of reference quotes." As I read on, though, the "good stuff" seemed to increase with each page and the references were necessary backup for Angela Phillips' conclusions. I soon found myself pressing on to the book's end without any further quibbles about style at all. It's content was too compelling. Robert Coles in his foreword says:

> ***We become the particular men and women we are as a consequence of many events and experiences. We are born here, not there, and now, not then; we have a particular woman and man as mother and father........ This is pure common sense, and yet how hard it can be for us to let the obvious take hold in our minds, so eager can we be to yield our minds to one or another ascendant if not imperial ideology. It is the virtue of this book, published at a time when men and women in the industrial West are struggling to figure out their respective fates and possibilities, that complexity is not short changed, that a discussion on "the trouble with boys" isn't permitted to become a harangue or a polemic........***

... the trouble with boys is that all too commonly "the only picture available [to them of what they should be like as grownups] is that of brute"

Not that the author, a sensitive and sensible English journalist, doesn't address us with a strong point of view. She writes as one convinced that too many boys grow up to be cold and callous husbands and fathers because they have learned that this is what men should be if they are to be considered by others, by themselves, as true men. She writes with the conviction, in her own words, that the trouble with boys is that all too commonly "the only picture available [to them of what they should be like as grownups] is that of brute" --and so the brutishness of all too many of us. Yet she also writes as one who appreciates the many forces and pressures at work in shaping sexual identity; and she does not want to ignore the emotional and behavioral differences between boys and girls that continue to puzzle us as we try to sort out nature and nurture, or the importance of history itself as it bears on culture and even biology.

I found myself flinching at many of Phillips' indictments of fathers' ways of raising sons, yet in many other ways I found myself a satisfactory father in her terms. Perhaps I should make who I am, the source of my biases, known. My father was born in 1903 to a French Canadian family of millworkers. His father deserted the family when he was two. My father worked the woolen mills for some years, was self-educated after the seventh grade and finally became a high school manual arts teacher. My mother was a Massachusetts Yankee with Mayflower relatives, privately educated and very sheltered all her young life. In spite of her sheltered beginnings she was vitally interested in our society and in humanity around the globe. She was an activist with her pen, constantly commenting on current events in the letter columns of local papers and national publications. I was an only son with a sister, four years younger, whom I love and respect. I fell in love with airplanes when I was about ten and after completing high school and a short stay in college, joined the Air Force, became a pilot and served a twenty year career. I have five sons by my first marriage, all in their thirties now, and two granddaughters and three grandsons. For the past eighteen years or so I have been seeking and to some degree, finding, my lost ability to feel emotion and my buried feminine side.

Maybe so much autobiography is out of place in a book review, but my origins and experience could be that of one of the author's case studies. I cite them because constantly as I read I found myself relating the material of the book to my life from childhood onward and saying in my mind things like, "Yes, that's true, I was taught that aggressive was a good adjective before the word boy," or, "Quite right, we gave and received 'wrist burns' and thumps on the shoulder to prove our manliness," or, "My military career certainly schooled me to be more unfeeling and heartless," or, "My sons were definitely affected badly by my absenteeism." I came to feel as I read, that the book was interacting with me and my experience, personally, in a way that left me with a deeper understanding of why my sons and I are as we are and what really is "the trouble with boys."

In the closing chapter, "The Power of Peers," Angela Phillips explores the process of putting men and women on an equal footing and the changes it will require. She says:

The hard thing for both men and women to cope with is the realization that sharing means that both sides need to give something up in order to take on something new.

> *As more women move into the world of work and up the power structures within it, they are themselves breeding a new kind of woman. Their daughters are less tightly connected. The distance may mean that they lose some of their need for intimacy that makes it so much harder for women to succeed. A world in which women are more like men is unlikely to be a better place unless it is complemented by men who are brought up with a correspondingly greater investment in close and nurturing relationships.*
>
> *The hard thing for both men and women to cope with is the realization that sharing means that both sides need to give something up in order to take on something new. Men are being pushed to relinquish the structures that keep them in power at the top, but so far no one has put much pressure on women to let men in at the bottom. Women believe that they are already doing this. They are convinced that men stay away from home and children because they are fundamentally selfish. The difficulty with this explanation is that it makes no sense. However selfish a woman might be, she very rarely abandons her children because to do so would simply hurt too much. Women don't stay with their children because they are more altruistic, but because they are too closely tied. Men don't leave their children because they are selfish, but because they were never tied closely enough.*
>
> *If boys are to give up their dreams of power in the world,*

> ***what will they get in exchange? Are women really willing to give up their preeminent position in the home? To share the job of taking care of children? Are women ready for custody arrangements where both parents really do share the care of their children after divorce? These are not questions that many women now have to consider. Few fathers ask to share what they have been taught to see as a burden, but if we want boys and men to grow up more emotionally open and connected that is what they will ask for.***

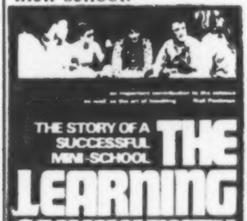
It gives me a feeling of hope and inner peacefulness to find these questions asked. They are crucial to changing "the trouble with boys." They also infer a warm picture of what family might be.

I recommend this book highly. I am sending copies to all my sons in the mail, particularly to Paul with his three sons and Andrew and Victor with their daughters.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The Learning Community:
the Story of a Successful Mini-school
by James Penha and John Azrak

Long out of print, this book tells the story of five high school teachers who successfully create an alternative "school-within-a-school. It is filled with the reflections of both the teachers and the students of how they created a caring atmosphere of community in their school.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The following review appears here and in the Winter issue of the* Journal of Family Life *(which I hope all of you are subscribing to! Wouldn't want you to miss out on all its glories (see ad):

REVIVING OPHELIA:

Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls

by Mary Pipher, Ph.D.
Ballantine Books, New York, 1995
$12.50, paperback

Reviewed by Nancy Ost

All parents worry about their teenage girls. Mothers from memories of having been there themselves; fathers from having been teenage boys looking at and pursuing teenage girls. But as Mary Pipher says in her challenging and urgent book, teenage girls today are having more trouble than they did thirty years ago and even more trouble than they did ten years ago. In her twenty years as a therapist, she is seeing more adolescent girls with eating disorders, addictions, and suicide attempts than ever before. Why is this?

Mary Pipher states so clearly and compassionately the answer to this question that, even with my many years of therapy, I understand for the first time what being "split" means in psychological terms. I could easily recollect images of myself and my daughters in preadolescence, care-free, interested in all of life, nature, sports, books, swinging, climbing, creating make-believe scenarios of various kinds, full of energy and vigor.

> ***We were reared by June Cleaver, radicalized by Janis Joplin, and had our consciousness raised by Gloria Steinem. We give toy trucks to our daughters along with dolls. We assure them they can grow up to be engineers, astronauts, and company presidents. We acknowledge their budding sexuality, encourage their questions, and reassure them of our love. Why then does study after study show that adolescent girls continue to lose their self-esteem, relinquish their ambitions and mute their voices?***
>
> ***—Ellen Uzelac, writer for* Common Boundary**

Then with adolescence comes another whole agenda, not set by the girls themselves, but set by a culture which has an image of females, an image to be molded and solidified at this vulnerable time of a young girl's life. Suddenly life becomes about pleasing others, looking good, having the right friends, wearing the "cool" clothes, being liked at any expense. When my middle daughter was a teen, I asked her why she didn't invite her friends over to our house instead of always going to theirs. We have a moderate income and an old house which is always in a "in-need-of-repair" state. She said it wasn't the house, itself, it was because we didn't have the right "stuff," like a micro-wave and a VCR. In her later teen years, as more friends began to cross our doorstep, I asked her if this was still an issue. She said she felt that "lack of stuff" then, but not any more. This is exactly what Pipher says happens; that often by the end of high school, most girls have worked through the issues of the early teen years. She says that some of her clients have become stronger persons as a result of dealing with the adversity in their younger lives. But this does not lessen the pain of these years or give us reason to ignore the urgency of Pipher's message; for what of themselves have they given up in order to make it through. In today's culture many girls deal with this pain through life-threatening means, starving themselves, bingeing and purging, suicide attempts, drugs, and early pregnancies.

As Pipher says,

Wholeness is shattered by the chaos of adolescence. Girls become fragmented, their selves split into mysterious contradictions.

> *Girls know they are losing themselves. One girl said, 'Everything good in me died in junior high.' Wholeness is shattered by the chaos of adolescence. Girls become fragmented, their selves split into mysterious contradictions. . . Adolescent girls experience a conflict between their autonomous selves and their need to be feminine, between their status as human beings and their vocation as females. De Beauvoir says, 'Girls stop being and start seeming.'. . . This pressure disorients and depresses most girls.*

At a time when girls need their parents' support the most, Pipher says girls shut down; parents become the enemy, peers become the source of information and support, even though they are going through the same storm. Pipher says most parents are as lost as their daughters about how to deal with the new personality which is now their daughter. Even as the therapist, she at times finds it difficult to access the world in which a troubled teen lives.

But Pipher has found ways to help girls who come to her. She gives them tools to access and express their feelings. She teaches them a process which is then intended to serve them their whole lives.

> ***The process involves looking within to find a true core of self, acknowledging unique gifts, accepting all feelings, not just the socially acceptable ones, and making deep and firm decisions about values and meaning. The process includes knowing the difference between thinking and feeling, between immediate gratification and long-term goals, and between her own voice and the voices of others. The process includes discovering the personal impact of our cultural rules for women. It includes discussion about breaking those rules and formulating new, healthy guidelines for the self. The process teaches girls to chart a course based on the dictates of their true selves. The process is nonlinear, arduous and discouraging. It is also joyful, creative and full of surprises.***

Yes, adolescence is a time which every person who comes of age must go through and the pain is part of the plan to reach adulthood. Indigenous cultures support young people during this difficult, yet necessary, transition through initiation rites and tribal community. Western culture, on the other hand, has become such that we make this period in a young person's life, both male and female, ever more troublesome through our consumer-based society, where corporations influence daily our values and our children's through increasingly seductive advertising. The media gives the message that pain and bad feelings will disappear if you are wearing the right jeans or smoking the "cool" cigarette. Parents are also sold this bill of goods and often, even against their better judgment, support the immediate gratification ethic of our culture.

Years ago the Carnegie Institute came out with the results of a study done on adolescents in the junior high school age group. The study said that this age has *particular* needs which can best be met by our school systems through small, intimate class settings, through significant amounts of time out of the school building, in the community, in the country, in settings which provide the opportunity for "rap-type" sessions where young people can get to explore themselves and each other which is the appropriate work at this time in their lives. Unfortunately, our schools are going in the direction of becoming larger, with tighter regimens keeping students within the four walls of the building, excellence in academics being the focus, with sports and the creative arts falling by the way side if the budget is tight.

- *A recent survey of adolescent girls by local officials in America's heartland, Lancaster County, Nebraska, showed that 40 percent of them had considered suicide.*
- *A survey of 8th- and 10th-graders published by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) found that girls were twice as likely as boys to report feeling sad and hopeless.*
- *David and the late Myra Sadker, researchers at American University in Washington, D.C., reported that between grade school and middle school, adolescent girls suffer a 13-point drop in IQ while boys lose only 3 points, a consequence that the Sadkers' research attributed to unequal treatment by teachers in the classroom.*
- *The AAUW found that in elementary school 60 percent of girls report being "happy the way I am." By the time they hit high school, only 29 percent say they are happy with themselves.*

From **Common Boundary** *for September/October, 1995.*

An article in the Sept.-Oct. issue of *Utne Reader* tells about a tight-knit community in Pennsylvania which carries the honor of having the healthiest people in the United States. The people there were found to smoke as much, exercise as little, and have just as much stress in their lives as other Americans. The difference is that they have "community." "There was a remarkable cohesiveness and sense of unconditional support within the community. Family ties were very strong."

Long term plans for helping adolescent girls involve deep-seated and complicated cultural changes—rebuilding a sense of community in our neighborhoods, fighting addictions, changing our schools, promoting gender equality and curtailing violence.

Once again we return to the knowledge that community is essential for healthy minds and bodies, a community which is sorely lacking in most of America today. We see this lack taking its toll on our young girls. As Pipher says,

> ***Growth requires courage and hard work on the part of the individual and it requires the protection and nurturing of the environment. . . Long term plans for helping adolescent girls involve deep-seated and complicated cultural changes—rebuilding a sense of community in our neighborhoods, fighting addictions, changing our schools, promoting gender equality and curtailing violence.***

Mary Pipher sounds the alarm in her compelling book and motivates the reader to take to heart the trouble which our adolescent girls are facing. May we have the courage to make the changes in ourselves and in our culture which are necessary to save the selves of our young people.

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How can parents help? Here are some of the ways suggested by the experts:

- *Encourage your daughter to keep a diary, to write an autobiography, or to express herself through short stories or poetry "It's a place where she can be totally honest," says [Darla] Romano. "It will strengthen her sense of self."*

- *Support her natural talents and interests, whether it's storytelling and sports or stocking streams and participating in neighborhood clean-ups. "Get your daughter out of the poisonous peer culture," advises Pipher. "When my daughter was in seventh grade, we worked at a homeless shelter. It put her in contact with adults trying to do something good, it taught her that drug and alcohol use wasn't romantic or sophisticated, and it let her know that when you see problems, you get to work instead of getting angry."*

- *Help your daughter recognize the forces that shape her, such as the ways in which women are portrayed in film and advertising. As parents, become familiar with your child's world. "Parents need to go to the Freddy Krueger movies, watch MTV, walk the halls of the junior high," says [Mary] Pipher. "That will give them some sympathy. It will also give them a language in which they can talk to their children."*

- *Finally, be a good listener. "One really important area coming out in all the research is how much kids want to talk and be listened to and how much they want to hear from you—particularly girls," says [Anne] Collins. "They want to hear from their mothers about how things got where they are, what they think about their own lives."*

From Common Boundary *for September/October, 1995.*

RAISING A SON:
Parents and the Making of a Healthy Man
by Don Elium & Jeanne Elium
Published by Beyond Words Publishing, Inc.,
443 NE Airport Road, Hillsboro, Oregon 97124
$12.95 (paperback)

Reviewed by: Larry Becker

This book is a "how-to" manual on raising sons, and in that regard, it provides a good deal of information and inspiration from both the feminine and masculine perspectives, the authors being a husband and wife team and counseling professionals. It was this instructional aspect that I read into the title that originally attracted me to *Raising a Son*. However, after reading a few chapters, there was an additional aspect that I began to appreciate—and that was the call to self-examination, to look at who I was as a son and who I am now, a self-examination that is essential to good parenting. The book contains so many stories from either the son's or parents perspective of life experiences, that it is difficult to avoid finding yourself described as either the parent or the son from time to time. The impact of this is subtle—while parents are reading this book and concentrating on improving their relationships with their sons, a second healing can potentially occur, I believe, within themselves. I know that seeing myself and my parents described in general, and sometimes specific, terms, caused me to engage in some re-parenting to fill a gap or two, unravel some knots, let go of some anger, feel some grief, and occasionally laugh about the commonalty of my life experiences (which I sometimes hold to be too precious and unique).

> ***To be life-givers, men must directly experience their own source of aliveness. And fathers in the technological age must challenge their sons back into the real life...that they both truly love doing.***

In some ways the title of the book could have been "How to Raise Yourself." One section of the book has the following quote:

> ***The issue is whether we are willing...to be engaged in our own lives and in the lives of others. Men, especially, must be committed to their own lives, or they try to take life from others. To be life-givers, men must directly experience their own source of aliveness. And fathers in the technological age must challenge their sons back into the real life...that they both truly love doing.***

I can see that the men and women who read this book with the intention of gaining knowledge about their sons, will invariably traverse the territory of their own childhoods and, if they can keep their hearts open, it will be to both their and their sons' benefit.

Reading *Raising a Son* are slowed me down long enough to contemplate, a practice that all parents could use: It leads to such thoughts as: Who is this boy who is my son?; How can I support his creative drives, his curious spirit, his deep soulfulness?; When do I need to just get out of his way and observe?; and so on. Portions contained messages about the impact of a father's approval of his son's heartfelt interests, and the worthwhile effort it takes to break free of this life's busy schedule to allow yourself the time to be involved in your son's life. Not "in his face" involvement, but "available," and available in a way that he knows it and will feel able to talk to you about what concerns him.

One section of the book describes listening to what your son says and then hearing what the authors refer to as the "positive intent" and the message. For example, the son says, "I'm going to dye my hair blue no matter what you think!" The positive intent is, "I want to be unique and belong to my group of friends." The son says, "I hate you!" The positive intent is, "I feel hurt." Or, "I feel angry with you." The son says, "Dad's a jerk. He never listens to me. He always lectures. I can't stand it." The positive intent is, "I need Dad on my side," and so forth and so on. To listen to your child's anger and not get totally emotionally plugged-in is a challenge, certainly for me. After all, it doesn't really work if your child is five, and you are simply a bigger five-year-old, or if your child is ten, and you are simply be a bigger ten-year-old, etc. Our children need us as adults and the time we spend as mothers or fathers is an investment that pays high dividends.

Raising a Son, and the resources it cites, are worth your time. I recommend it to parents with growing children, as well as to older men and women who perhaps have a relationship with a son (or with a parent) they wish to heal. It couldn't hurt.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

PARENTS ON THE RUN:
A Common Sense Book For Parents Today

by Willard and Marguerite Beecher

published by Devorss & Company, 1983. $6.95, paperback
Box 550, Marina Del Rey, CA 90294

Reviewed by Charlene Therrien

This indeed is "a common sense book for parents today." In fact, it is definitely the best one I have ever seen. In a world where the infantilization of children is commonplace and even institutionalized, this book is required reading for anyone who would like to help their children or students towards self-sufficiency and maturity.

The Beechers discuss a wide range of topics including parents' rights, the emotional crippling of children, feeble-mindedness, self-sufficiency, intelligence tests and others too numerous to mention. Some of the more provocative chapter headings are:

Colonial Status Is Not Good For Parents
Justice Is Security
Children In Search of Limits
and *They Weren't Born Hobbled.*

There are no gimmicks or gurus here—just straightforward sanity.

This book is positively loaded with quality metaphors, and metaphors are the highways to understanding. How many times have I heard someone complain about parenting books that they give tons of examples that don't seem to help? It's too hard to figure out how they apply because when you try to superimpose your own situation; pieces stick out here and there. Then you turn it and turn it but no matter how you do it never fits perfectly. It's a little like describing a few animals from a species instead of defining the attributes of the species itself. At best, the reader is left to figure out what the commonalities are. At worst, the descriptions may not help at all.

Not so here. The metaphors are precise and creative and in many cases, gently humorous. You could say that this book models, by its style and tone, a way of approaching life with children. It is neither child-centered nor child-critical. Over and over the implicit questions are asked, "What do you want for your child and for yourself?" and "Is what you are doing getting you what you want?" Wisdom there.

The authors suggest that "the 'insecurity' we see so often today in children exists because they do not know the limits of their authority and their responsibilities." They describe the almost unlimited list of symptoms a child can exhibit to keep his parents off-balance and under control (e.g., bedwetting, nightmares, picky eating, school failure, sexual delinquincy), calling them "traps." Here are some particularly vivid samples:

> ***If a child is using any symptom we may be sure that she is doing so because she has tested it and has found that it strikes fear in the heart of the parent.***
>
> ***It is ridiculous for parents to be terrified if a child skips a meal or two. The child will gladly undereat if it is the one way in which he can pinpoint the parents Achilles' heel and get a response!***
>
> ***We can see that the child who is a problem is like an animal who digs his hole with many exits... Our main job is to change the situation so that he is a child who has a problem. We must close every escape hatch except the one into self--sufficiency.***

When we fail to do so, they assert, we are simply postponing the time when he really will have a problem. But they are not talking here about blind compliance. In fact they address extensively the subject of "the unholy alliance between the child dominated home and the I.Q. dominated school," and suggest that both have been "putting the emphasis on education from the ears up instead of educating children to live as good fellow men (and women), to give as much as they take, and to live and let live."

The results of teaching such life skills, they say, are "self-propelling" children and parents who become happy adults who live their own lives and also help to promote the welfare of the community.

This book is a bargain at twice the price. It is one that I would buy for my own children if they decide to become parents. One could live with this book.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SECTION IV: *Issues In Education:*

The following article was adapted from a review essay that recently appeared in Ron Miller's book review magazine/mail order catalog, Great Ideas in Education. Ron was the founding editor of Holistic Education Review and has written or edited four books, most recently Educational Freedom for a Democratic Society a critique of national goals and standards. [see review which follows the article, ed.] Ron is also involved with the Bellwether School and home-schooling resource center near Burlington, Vermont, and is a long-time contributor to, and friend of, ΣΚΟΛΕ. For a free copy of GIE, call (800) 639-4122 or write to P.O. Box 298, Brandon VT 05733.

THE RENEWAL OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE: A MULTIFACETED TASK

by Ron Miller

It is obvious to nearly everyone by now that modern American society has entered a period of grave crisis. In almost every realm of social life, we are beset by uncertainty and apparent decline. Our economic system is funneling vast wealth to a few but cannot provide quality employment to the rest of the people. Our political system has been poisoned by special interest lobbying and right wing demagoguery. Suspicion and resentment between races are on the rise, moral and ethical values are up for grabs, and the young generation is steeped in the violence, nihilism and consumerism purveyed by the mass media. These are tragic and dangerous times.

> ***How can one simultaneously support public schools as laboratories of democracy and also look to radical alternatives for inspiration? How do we prioritize such fundamental goals as social justice, personal freedom and ecological literacy?***

Concerned educators, particularly those committed to alternative forms of teaching and learning, have responded to the modern crisis with stirring visions of social and educational renewal. These visions reflect diverse points of view: Progressive educators want to reclaim public education as a laboratory of democracy, while those with a more libertarian perspective point out the dangers of state schooling. Some visionaries emphasize the spiritual nature of the child or the urgency of the environmental crisis, and some educational philosophers are trying to draw our attention to the modernist epistemology underlying American culture and education. I believe that all of these responses to the modern crisis are worth considering and, indeed, worth acting upon. The task therefore us requires a multifaceted response.

Yet, the variety of these responses can itself be confusing. How can one simultaneously support public schools as laboratories of democracy and also look to radical alternatives for inspiration? How do we prioritize such fundamental goals as social justice, personal freedom and ecological literacy? In this essay I would like to outline a holistic framework for considering and acting upon these multiple visions of cultural and educational renewal. I first introduced this framework in 1991 (in "Holism and Meaning: Foundations for a Coherent Holistic Theory" *Holistic Education Review* vol. 4 no. 3) and have since found it very helpful for discussing the education crisis with teachers and graduate students. It is based upon the idea that human beings experience the world at *multiple levels of wholeness:* A holistic view recognizes that all phenomena have meaning when they are considered in larger contexts, which themselves are meaningful according to still larger contexts. The diverse visions for educational renewal do not contradict each other, but are relevant to different contexts of experience, different levels of meaning. We need them all.

To begin with, we need to be concerned with the wholeness and integrity of the individual. In educational terms, this has often been referred to as teaching "the whole child." Humanistic and child-centered educators have emphasized this perspective since the time of Rousseau and Pestalozzi, seeing the human being as a complex organism arising from the dynamic interplay of psychological, emotional, social, spiritual and other vital energies. The educational pioneers Rudolf Steiner and Maria Montessori emphasized this view of human nature, as have radical and humanistic psychologists; recent theories of multiple intelligences and learning styles express a similar recognition of human complexity, although in drier scientific language. One of the primary roots of our cultural crisis is the opposing, reductionistic view that young people are merely "intellectual capital"—a national resource or raw material for the industrial economy; this understanding, firmly grounded in behaviorist psychology, dismisses any appreciation for the living wholeness of human beings as 'romantic' and sentimental. But the social and spiritual damage caused by this reductionism is now becoming apparent.

> Personal growth and integration are highly problematic in a dysfunctional or authoritarian social environment. Consequently, we need to be concerned with integrity and wholeness at the level of community.

The wholeness of the individual person is irreducible, and must not be lost in the face of other concerns and agendas. In other words, it is no less important than achieving a multicultural democracy or raising environmental awareness. But the expression of individual wholeness is always relative to larger contexts such as family, community, society, and history. Personal growth and integration are highly problematic in a dysfunctional or authoritarian social environment. Consequently, we need to be concerned with integrity and wholeness at the level of community. Is the learning environment conducive to freedom, honest communication, and genuine caring? Does the school nourish such an environment within the classroom? Does the neighborhood or local political climate support such a school? Do the dominant social and economic institutions allow for such a climate in local affairs? We are in crisis today because dominant social and educational practices force us to answer "No!" to each of these questions. But the alternative education movement has demonstrated many ways of saying "Yes!" to a healthy community life, including democratic schools and family-centered initiatives such as cooperative schools and homeschooling.

Still, the possibilities for community are deeply affected by the next level of meaning, the ideological sphere, where a society's political power and economic resources are divided and distributed. Radical educators from the social reconstructionists of the 1930's to the critical pedagogy theorists of today have maintained that the modern system of corporate capitalism involves far more than the democratic-sounding notion of "free enterprise": it actually engenders a hierarchical ordering of society that supplies special privileges to a small group of élites while ensuring that others—particularly people of color and lower socio-economic classes—have limited access to meaningful power or wealth. Numerous historical and sociological studies have demonstrated how schooling has been deliberately and effectively used as a social sorting mechanism. Testing, grading, tracking, authoritative textbooks, monocultural curricula, skill-centered literacy devoid of meaning, the "hidden curriculum" of school architecture, management and routines, and the drastically unequal funding of public schools in different communities all contribute to the power of education to reinforce an essentially élitist ideological vision.

> ***The creation of grassroots alternatives to the dominant system is surely an important step toward a more participatory democratic society.***

The creation of grassroots alternatives to the dominant system is surely an important step toward a more participatory democratic society. This step becomes even more significant when alternative schools pose explicit challenges to privilege and injustice (as many of them do), such as by offering students opportunities for multicultural experience or political activism, or by making their programs inviting and empowering for minority or poor families. Some alternative educators claim that their work is apolitical, but this can never be entirely true, because all education takes place in a social, economic and ideological context. Outside our homes and schools, no matter how nurturing and democratic these might be, all young people must relate in some way to a world that contains a great deal of conflict, injustice, violence and suffering. Through our words and actions, we show young people either that they can respond actively and compassionately to this world or ignore it so long as it doesn't interfere with their personal concerns. Even though we teach democratic values by living them, and not through indoctrination, this does not make our educational practice nonpolitical.

It is true that many educational visionaries go to the opposite extreme, seeing social and economic institutions as the

> ***... a number of cultural historians have begun to examine the world-view that emerged in Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the modernist world-view of materialism, competitive individualism and scientific reductionism.***

root of all human suffering, and wanting to turn education into an an ideological crusade. But this is an incomplete understanding, reductionistic in its own way, because it fails to acknowledge the more local and personal contexts of meaning just outlined as well as the more pervasive and habitual context of world-view or culture. The modern state and corporate capitalism did not arise as historical accidents—they are the inevitable manifestations of deep-seated beliefs about the nature of reality (epistemology), about human nature, and about ultimate values (theology and ethics).

In the past several years, a number of cultural historians have begun to examine the world-view that emerged in Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the modernist world-view of materialism, competitive individualism and scientific reductionism. Authors such as Morris Berman, Theodore Roszak, Carolyn Merchant, Jeremy Rifkin, Joseph Chilton Pearce, Jerry Mander and Thomas Berry have been joined by leading edge scientists including Fritjof Capra, David Bohm, Rupert Sheldrake, and others in questioning the adequacy, wisdom, and long-term viability of this modern world-view. According to their analysis, the social and ecological crisis of our time stems directly from the reductionistic world-view we have inherited from Francis Bacon, René Descartes and those who stood to profit from their teaching that nature is an inert resource to be exploited. Educational theorists at several universities (including holistic thinkers such as Douglas Sloan, Donald Oliver, Kathleen Kesson, John P. Miller, William Doll, David W. Orr, Gregory Smith, C.A. Bowers, and others exploring the ideas of "postmodernism") have looked more closely at the way schools perpetuate the underlying assumptions of modern culture, and what we might do instead to liberate our creativity and imagination for developing a new world view.

This critique of modern culture has led many of us to recognize additional contexts or levels of meaning which had

... beyond the technologies that have fashioned our artificial world, beyond our cultural forms, our lives ultimately depend on the health (the integrity and wholeness) of the planetary ecosystem.

been rendered virtually invisible to people in industrialized societies. We are gaining a new appreciation for the ecological context of human existence: beyond the technologies that have fashioned our artificial world, beyond our cultural forms, our lives ultimately depend on the health (the integrity and wholeness) of the planetary ecosystem. Humans are one interdependent element, not the master, of the vastly complex system of plant and animal species, atmospheric chemistry, soil, water, and energy that make up the "biotic community," as it was called by the pioneer environmentalist Aldo Leopold. Traditional, pre-modern cultures held their relationship to nature as sacred, a world-view that industrialized people need to relearn. This is a vitally important mission for education today.

When holistic educators refer to the spiritual aspect of an individual's wholeness, they mean that the vital force which animates one's personality is not an objectifiable psychological or biological process but a deeply creative, self-unfolding, purposeful, meaning-seeking spark of consciousness that in some mysterious way connects the person directly to the vast evolving drama of the cosmos.

Finally, there is still another context of meaning that is essential to the renewal of culture and education, although it too, thanks to our reductionistic world-view, is unfamiliar and out of place in modern society. This is the spiritual dimension of human existence. When holistic educators refer to the spiritual aspect of an individual's wholeness, they mean that the vital force which animates one's personality is not an objectifiable psychological or biological process but a deeply creative, self-unfolding, purposeful, meaning-seeking spark of consciousness that in some mysterious way connects the person directly to the vast evolving drama of the cosmos. This drama is larger than any other context in which we play out our lives, and in fact is what makes meaning possible in any of them. A culture that places less value on spiritual experience than on economic growth and technology is necessarily an impoverished and decadent culture.

Does this mean, then, that we need to bring religion back into education? A holistic answer would be that we do need to reclaim the *essence* of religious concern—spirituality—but that the numerous *forms* this could take would depend heavily on cultural, ideological and personal circumstances. School prayer may well be an appropriate response for many people, but it certainly is not for others. Some wise people who have written about spirituality in education (Thomas Merton, Parker Palmer, Krishnamurti, and Rudolf Steiner come to mind), indicate that spirituality is nourished, not through formal rituals that students practice in school, but by the *quality of relationship* that is developed between person and world. We can, and must, cultivate an attitude of caring, respect, and contemplation to replace the narrow modernist view that the world is a resource to be exploited. This simple but profound change in attitude is the essential ingredient of all the emerging visions of cultural and educational renewal.

Here are some of my favorite books on the cultural, ecological and spiritual dimensions of education which I think alternative educators will find rewarding:

Insight-Imagination: The Emancipation of Thought and the Modern World. Douglas Sloan. (Brandon, VT: Resource Center for Redesigning Education, 1994).

A Postmodern Perspective on Curriculum. William E. Doll, Jr. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993).

Education and the Environment: Learning to Live with Limits. Gregory A. Smith. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).

Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World. David W. Orr. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).

Toward a Critical Politics of Teacher Thinking: Mapping the Postmodern. Joe L. Kincheloe. (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1993).

To Know as We are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey. Parker J. Palmer. (San Francisco: Harper, 1993).

Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education. Gregory Cajete. (Durango, CO: Kivaki, 1994).

The Renewal of Meaning in Education: Responses to the Cultural and Ecological Crisis of Our Times. Ron Miller, editor. (Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press, 1993).

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The following article on non-violence was sent to us by long-time friend and colleague Mary Ellen Bowen. Mary Ellen is Executive Director of the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program 2012 21st Avenue, South Nashville, TN 37212. The community known as The Farm, in Summertown, TN, of which she has been a member since the sixties, is a pioneering communard group whose history, beginning with a procession of old school buses led by Ina May and Stephen Gaskin from the Haight in San Francisco and ending in the Promised Land of what became The Farm, has been a distinguished one from its outset until the present, encompassing too many major societal, artistic and technological innovations to enumerate here.

Mary Ellen was intimately involved from the first as a member, a parent and a teacher at the Farm School while her kids were growing up. She has also been active in the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, and hosted a Tennessee Alternative Educators conference a few years ago in Nashville.

THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE

by Mary Ellen Bowen

> *People fail to get along because they fear each other.*
> *They fear each other because they don't know each other.*
> *They don't know each other because*
> *They have not properly communicated with each other.*
>
> *—Martin Luther King*

Conflict resolution training without paying attention to the factors that create and sustain community is no more than throwing good seed on dry ground. Peace will not grow.

Preventing violence and educating for peace are based on being able to build a "just community." No course on violence prevention or conflict resolution skills will "take" if there are no pre-existing and on-going community-building efforts. Conflict resolution training without paying attention to the factors that create and sustain community is no more than throwing good seed on dry ground. Peace will not grow. For conflict resolution and violence prevention to work, both the climate and the opportunity for it to work, must be intentionally created.

There is no such thing as instant community and there are no quick fixes to the escalating problem of violence in our midst.

Building and maintaining community takes intention, know-how and a great deal of work over a long period of time. The key ingredient is creating a safe space for authenticity that builds each person's self-esteem and fosters listening and learning from each other.

This does not mean, of course, that there is no discord in a community. Conflict is inevitable! Understanding that conflict is inevitable, even potentially good for the community—and being able to deal with it directly, openly and honestly is what distinguishes a just community from chaos or from silent, resentful compliance and, ultimately, subterfuge. Managing conflict and building community take skills that most do not currently have, whatever rank or level of professional achievement. These skills simply have not been taught.

Non-violence has deep historical roots, but is still in its infancy as a representation of a revolutionary way of getting along in the world. It challenges the old ways of thinking about everything from personal interactions to international affairs. It has the potential to transform the world and each person has the potential to make it happen. But the first step is to understand it. The definition of non-violence should not only encompass the renunciation of the will to kill or the intention to hurt any living being through hostile thought, word, or deed, but it should involve the conscious integration of compassion into every aspect of one's daily life. There is nothing magical about non-violence. It requires courage and hard work, strategizing, self-discipline, strength, and a well-integrated spirituality. It requires a willingness to learn! from our enemies and at the same time not limiting our response by taking up their view of reality. It demands the ability on our part to desire their safety as well as our own; to love the enemy, even while we refuse to cooperate. These are the threads that weave security. These are the patterns that disarm. When we undertake a knowledgeable effort to be non-violent in all areas of life, we become part of a planetwide movement that will evolve our human history to its next, higher level. Our per-

We cannot reach security by creating insecurity. We cannot reach disarmament by arming. We cannot create a less violent world by using more violence.

sonal best, in the Big Picture, turns out also to be the world's cosmic best. Non-violence is the process of peace. It is not the finished product, but it offers greater harmony in our relations with others, greater integrity within ourselves, and a sense of being part of a movement to change the world for the better. Goals of security and peace are more readily attainable if we use methods which do not contradict them. We cannot reach security by creating insecurity. We cannot reach disarmament by arming. We cannot create a less violent world by using more violence.

> ***... as peacemakers, we are always called to build community. We cannot undertake concerned action on behalf of peace without a community to empower and challenge us.***

Today in America and the world, we are not likely to be able to contribute much to peacemaking until we ourselves become skilled peacemakers. And as peacemakers, we are always called to build community. We cannot undertake concerned action on behalf of peace without a community to empower and challenge us. We need to see community-building as the essential knot at the end of the thread that runs through an our peacemaking efforts. A community needs to be a safe place to talk about real things. If we are to be individuals with integrity in a community, we are called to speak out, to overcome the psychology of reticence, to accept the existence of conflict and then to incorporate individual differences into a transformed whole. Integrity is never painless and community is not painless. But if we stay with the process and simultaneously learn skills to confront differing realities as gently and directly as possible, we will feel the healing effect of the communities we have built. Here conflict resolution and violence prevention techniques can root and flower. Violence prevention and community building are profoundly interrelated. Violence prevention—currently defined as metal detectors, stiffer sentences, gun control and conflict resolution training—will do little without paying close attention to the true meaning of a "just community" and doing what it takes to get there.

In A *Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martln Luther King, Jr.,* King states that "violence solves no social problems; it merely creates new and more complicated ones" (7). He was greatly influenced by Mohandas Gandhi and said that the alternative to violence is non-violent resistance. King says that this message of using non-violent resistance to stimulate social change has five main points:

1. This method takes courage; it does resist. The non-violent resistor is just as opposed to evil as is the person who uses violence. This method is strongly active spiritually.

2. Non-violent resistance does not humiliate or defeat the opponent, but tries to win friendship and understanding. An end being reconciliation, the aftermath of non-violence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.

3. This method is one where the attack is directed against the forces of evil rather than against persons who are caught in those forces. The goal is to attack the problem, not the person. This is really the way of the strong and not a method of stagnant passivity.

4. Non-violent resistance avoids not only external physical violence but also the internal violence of spirit. Central to non-violence is the principle of love. One needs morality enough to cut off the chain of hate and this can be done only by projecting the ethics of love into the center of our lives.

5. The method of non-violent resistance is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. It is this deep faith in the future that causes the non-violent resistor to adapt to suffering without retaliation. (7-9)

The beauty of non-violence is that you can struggle without hating; you can fight war without violence. The message is simple and can be summarized as follows:

A. Don't obey unjust laws or submit to unjust practices.
B. Do this peacefully, openly, and cheerfully because the aim is to persuade.
C. Adopt the means of non-violence because the end is a community at peace with itself. Try to persuade with words, but if words fail, try to persuade with acts.
D. Take direct action against injustice without waiting for other agencies to do so. (149)
E. In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps:
    l) collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive, 2) negotiation, 3) self-purification, and 4) direct action. (290)

A recent twenty-six-year longitudinal study on empathy disclosed that the single factor more closely related to the development of empathy in children is the active involvement of the father in child rearing. Empathy is traditionally conditioned out of boys, who account for eighty-nine percent of all violent acts.

In training material from the Center of Peace Education in North Carolina, it is stated that the United States is the most dangerous place on the planet. Violence is epidemic in this country, the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of eleven and twenty-one, and the leading cause of death for black males. Violence is a learned behavior, heavily condoned and promoted by some segments of society, especially through television and film, where it is rewarded and glorified as a way to handle anger. Empathy is inversely related to violent behavior. A recent twenty-six-year longitudinal study on empathy disclosed that the single factor more closely related to the development of empathy in children is the active involvement of the father in child rearing. Empathy is traditionally conditioned out of boys, who account for eighty-nine percent of all violent acts.

Change may come about either because it is imposed on us—by natural events or deliberate reform—or because we voluntarily participate in or even initiate change when we find dissatisfaction, inconsistency, or intolerability in our current situation. In either case, the meaning of change will rarely be clear at the outset and ambivalence will pervade the transition. Innovations cannot be assimilated until their meanings are shared.

In a monograph entitled "Retributive Justice, Restorative Justice," Howard Zehr speaks of dispute resolution as follows:

> ***For most of our history in the West, non-judicial, non-legal dispute resolution techniques have dominated. People traditionally have been very reluctant to call in the state, even when the state claimed a role. In fact, a great deal of stigma was attached to going to the state and asking it to prosecute. For centuries the state's role in prosecution was quite minimal.***
>
> ***Instead, it was considered the business of the community to solve its own disputes. Even when state-operated courts became***

> ***available, they were often places of last resort, and it was common to settle out of court after court proceedings had been initiated. Out-of-court settlements were so normal, in fact, that a new French legal code as late as 1670 prohibited the state from getting involved if the parties came to a settlement, even after proceedings had begun.***
>
> ***Most of our history has been dominated by informal dispute resolution processes for conflicts, including many of the conflicts today defined as crimes, and these processes highlighted negotiation/arbitration models. Agreements were negotiated, sometimes using community leaders or neighbors in key roles. Agreements were validated by local notables, by government notaries, by priests: often parties would go before such a person, once an agreement was made, and make it binding. But they were negotiated rather than imposed. ([7])***

The philosophy of non-violence is vital because it is the only way to reestablish the broken community. The community is complex and most definitions do not do the concept justice. In *The Different Drum: Community Building and Peace,* F. Scott Peck states that a community is a group that is inclusive rather than exclusive; is characterized by commitment to the group; operates on consensus; values and appreciates differences; is contemplative (examines itself); and fights gracefully. It concerns itself with the many and significant lives of its members; allows and values differences of opinion; shares a commitment to a common purpose; has an agreement about procedures for handling conflict within the group; has members who share responsibility for the actions of the group; and has members who have enduring and personal contact with each other.

... it is only when we become empty that the spirit of true community can enter.

Peck also identifies four stages of community building. First there is pseudo-community characterized by superficial interaction—group members avoid conflict and deny or cover up their fears. Next comes chaos where someone in the group begins to voice differences of opinion. Heated conflicts may arise and groups members may tend to take sides. Some group members try compulsively to "fix it" or avoid the conflict, unable to deal with the anger and the pain. In the third stage, emptiness, there is a possibility of achieving community. The group can be exhausted or despairing, but it is only when we become empty that the spirit of true community can enter. The fourth and final stage is true community, which is characterized by the attributes listed above. The benefits of having gone through this difficult process include a sense of trust and belonging where group members can be honest and real. It is this honesty and acceptance of each other as humans that make true community an essential part of improving intergroup relations. Once a feeling of safety is created, group members are less afraid of conflict and may even see it as an opportunity and learn from it. There are new forms of shared leadership—power with, not power over.

Conflict is a normal and essential part of life. The way we deal with differences and conflict, however, often divides us, and inhibits our ability to confront common problems. Complex social issues and increasing global interdependence place new demands on our capacities to work together. When handled constructively, conflict presents opportunities for growth and progress. People of any age can acquire skills and understandings that will help them to deal with conflict in constructive ways. Curriculums are available for learning, modeling, and teaching non-violent communication skills such as: how to listen to each other, how to contribute ideas and communicate them clearly; how to disagree without rejecting; how to label and express feelings—gives everyone insights into their own and others' expectations, misconceptions, fears, differing perspectives, and information, and takes learning to new levels of both comprehension and compassion.

Conflicts within a diverse population are more frequent when people are unable to tolerate and "live with" value and cultural differences.

Conflict occurs when basic needs are not met, or when an individual or group is interfering with or obstructing an individual's or group's attainment of certain goals. Conflicts often involve struggles over the allocation and use of resources and power. When people are competing to win or coerce an "adversary" into submission, conflicts are often intense and protracted. People in conflict bring deeply felt emotions to the situation even though these emotions may not be expressed out loud. Conflicts within a diverse population are more frequent when people are unable to tolerate and "live with" value and cultural differences.

Recognizing and affirming our own feelings creates the potential for relationship. Expressing anger directly, without verbal or physical abuse, is a crucial interpersonal skill. Mediation by a trusted third party can provide support and a safe space for airing hurt and angry feelings. In "Teaching Kids to Think First," 11th-grader Cynthia Cardona says "Conflict resolution makes you think about the consequences of arguments and how they can easily turn violent." Conflict resolution is best taught in the context of a caring community characterized by cooperation, effective communication, emotional strength; appreciation of differences, recognition of common purposes and shared decision-making. A singular focus on conflict resolution knowledge and skills without attention to creating community may miss underlying causes of problems. Caring and empathy are as important as knowing how to negotiate. Many programs teach conflict resolution as a set of isolated skills. Although individual skills are useful, the practice of creative response to conflict entails more than a collection of isolated skills; it is an integrative process that happens when one is confronted with a real problem. It also involves a systematic way of thinking about dealing with differences.

Mediation is about bringing people together face-to-face in the presence of a fair witness, to communicate about problems and come to an agreement they think is fair. The Community Mediation Project was initiated by the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) of Nashville because of recognition of the need to provide mediation not only in the courts but in the schools and neighborhoods where the problems arise. Mediators are trained volunteers and the process is always voluntary. The newsletter of a VORP in California says,

> ***Mediation represents a revolutionary and promising shift from the bureaucratic and punitive intervention upon which the modern world has come to rely. (VORP Connection 6).***

The Community Mediation Project is an embodiment of the values and philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King in his vision of healthy community. The Project's philosophy looks at mediation as a win-win situation. Traditional conflict resolution techniques, especially using the courts, result in a win-lose situation, where there can only be one winner and one loser. By framing their own solutions to their own problems, participants in mediation end up with a decision they initiated, can live with and about which they can feel good. It is their problem, and it should be their solution. Mediation empowers people. It looks to the future. It teaches that although conflict is inevitable, it need not be fraught with anger and anxiety, and it is not a permanent condition. Experts need not be called in. Vast amounts of money need not be spent. Mediation benefits the community by keeping decision-making power in the community. The process helps people understand each other and gain respect for each other's circumstances and point of view. Mediation is a very powerful tool for change in its simplicity. It is a means of bringing people together to negotiate their own changes in the family, in the neighborhood and in the greater community. This is the philosophy of the Community Mediation Project newly established in two Nashville neighborhoods.

The Organized Neighbors of Edgehill (ONE), and the Sunnyside Community Group approached VORP about having community mediation in their respective neighborhoods. The Nashville Prevention Partnership funded the project with a seed grant earlier this year. Establishing a Community Mediation Project in neighborhoods such as these helps families deal with problems quickly and without having to take legal action. More than seventy percent of these neighborhood populations is African American and many of the young males are at risk of getting into trouble. The Community Mediation Project functions as a very effective empowerment tool that brings the families together as allies in problem-solving. Where there is a release of feelings of hurt and fear coupled with agreed-upon restitution. real healing can occur. Juvenile Court Probation Officer Valeria Sweeney says:

> ***Mediation is one of the top two or three possible interventions that a probation officer can use to help young people in trouble. The effect of having to face the person who has been hurt and deal with the feelings is very powerful not only with children but also with adults. In time, after residents have been participating in mediation, conflict resolution training, and most importantly, after some individuals have been participating as volunteer mediators, the skills of problem-solving and non-violent conflict resolution will be translated more deeply into family life and only then can real societal change occur. People are much more likely to carry out agreements that***

> *they have entered into with their freedom intact.*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, reports that Cicero in the first century B.C. said that freedom is participation in power. There is nothing essentially wrong with power. The problem is that in America power is unequally distributed. The Gandhian influence on the civil rights movement was its emphasis on a revolution mounted on hope and love, hope and non-violence.

> *We maintained the hope while transforming the hate of traditional revolutions into positive non-violent power. (45).*

Non-violent coercion always brings tension to the surface, but this tension need not be seen as destructive. This tension is both healthy and necessary for growth. People can embark on social experimentation with their own strengths to generate the kind of power that shapes basic decisions.

> *Nonviolent direct action will continue to be a significant source of power until it is made irrelevant in the presence of justice. (139).*

> *Personal conflicts between husband, wife and children will diminish when the unjust measurement of human worth on a scale of dollars is eliminated. (164).*

> *We still have a choice today: non-violent coexistence or violent co-annihilation. This may well be [humanity's] last chance to choose between chaos and community. (191).*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

REVIEWS:

AMAZING GRACE— The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation

by Jonathan Kozol

Crown Publishers, Inc., 1995.
201 E. 50th St., NYC, NY 10022
$23 hardcover

Reviewed by Mary Leue

For over two decades Jonathan Kozol's life has been totally dedicated to the lives of the most vulnerable and forgotten children in the nation. The titles of his books bear eloquent witness to his faithfulness to these young beings:

> **Death at an Early Age,** *for which he won the National Book Award, chronicles Jonathan's early struggles to teach the children in his public school classroom in the manner he was instructed to employ, and his growing awareness of the genocidal implications of this institutional mandate as applied to the children of the urban poor.*
>
> **Free Schools** *is his exploration of schools that actually work to address the needs of this population, highlighting the necessity of parental involvement and control and the importance of shaping the curriculum to the child rather than the other way around.*
>
> *This book also documents Jonathan's realization of the signal failure of the great majority of his own college generation to stay with the problem of poverty long enough to learn the skills, acquire the means, take on the staying power to help make the changes needed for the reform of society for which, during the sixties, they had written, spoken and marched in support of a social revolution which was to reverse the horrifying injustices of the society, His bitter characterizations of this abdication lost him many friends and colleagues, but he persisted in his single efforts to do his best, whether singly or as a member of a group.* **The Night is Dark and I am Far From Home** *is a product of this period of his life—among other things, a product of his sense of*

alienation from the majority culture.

Jonathan's travels and explorations on behalf of the children of the poor led him to Cuba as a possible source for a model for social/educational success in resolving the plight of the oppressed. **Children of the Revolution** *documents his discoveries and conclusions.*

On Being a Teacher *and* **Illiterate America** *are the fruits of Jonathan's subsequent explorations into the complexities of the American public school system, documenting both its failures and its potential for reviving our sense of equity as a nation. At this time, Jonathan seemed to me to be putting all his philosophical eggs into the public school system basket as our best hope for turning around the horrifying inequities generated by our socio-economic system. In contrast with private and religious schools, it is true that only public schools accept all comers—and, in this sense, are the only democratic schools we have.*

In the face of increasingly rapid and drastically destructive social changes, however, such as the steady disappearance of unskilled jobs and the increasing concentration of the poor in the cities, society's safeguards against personal and familial disaster, never very effective at best—the social workers, teachers, principals, doctors, nurses, police, landlords and so on—became to an increasing degree the chief source of daily oppression for these people in the face of these economic and environmental changes. Nothing worked any more!

Jonathan's personal explorations of these conditions of life in the ghetto led to his writing **Rachel and her Children** *(which won the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award) and* **Savage Inequalities**, *a best seller and a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, two passionate chronicles of the appalling misery suffered by the forgotten families at the bottom of the heap in our cities. By focusing on the conditions of the lives of a few of these people, especially the lives of the children, the plight of the forgotten poor becomes totally vivid to the reader, totally impossible to ignore! Jonathan's writing skill, always keen, has been further honed by the depth of his warm, heartfelt human caring about the conditions of their lives.*

The subjects of Amazing *Grace*, Jonathan's newest book, are, again, the families and children of the poor, but in this book I sense an even further deepening of his ability to share the world of his friends in the ghetto: in this case, the people of the Mott Haven neighborhood in the Washington Heights section of Harlem about which he writes. The inner rage he has been carrying all these years over the incredible ability of the policy-makers in government to ignore these conditions has modulated into an awareness that the problem is now far beyond the powers of any one person, group, law, reform, improvement, alleviation or whatever to solve.

I have never lived through a time as cold as this in the United States.

His tone has softened into a sense of acceptance—not resignation, but acceptance—which replaces indignation with a deep sense of loss, of mourning. Jonathan focuses instead on the astounding humanity, courage, grace, hope, even wisdom of many of these people, including the children.

> *I look at my notes as the plane crosses Connecticut. I'm looking forward to getting home and sitting at my desk and trying to make sense of everything I've learned. But I don't really think I will make sense of anything and I don't expect that I'll be able to construct a little list of "answers" and "solutions," as my editor would like. I have done this many times before; so have dozens of other writers; so have hundreds of committees and foundations and commissions. The time for lists like that now seems long past.*
>
> *Will the people Reverend Groover called "the principalities and powers" look into their hearts one day in church or synagogue and feel the grace of God and, as he put it, "be transformed"? Will they become ashamed of what they've done, or what they have accepted? Will they decide they do not need to quarantine the outcasts of their ingenuity and will they then use all their wisdom and their skills to build a new society and new economy in which no human being will be superfluous? I wish I could believe that, but I don't think it is likely. I think it is more likely that they'll write more stories about "Hope Within the Ashes" and then pile on more ashes*

> *and then change the subject to the opening of the ballet or a review of a new restaurant. And the children of disappointment will keep dying.*
>
> *I think that Mrs. Washington is right to view the years before us with foreboding. I have never lived through a time as cold as this in the United States. Many men and women who work in the Bronx believe that it is going to get worse. I don't know what can change this* (p. 230).

He speaks with a number of people in the neighborhood, returning again and again until he becomes a real friend in whom they can confide their innermost feelings. Mrs. Washington and her son David, with whom he shares many meals and several crises, the children Anabelle and Anthony, who tell him about their sense of God and of heaven, the poet Mr. Castro, with whom he has a number of profound conversations, the Episcopalian priest of St. Ann's—"Mother Martha," as they call her—people with AIDS, junkies, asthmatics, teen-age whores, people living with rats and swarming cockroaches—all become his personal friends or his recognized acquaintances. His acceptance mirrors the acceptance of other residents of the ghetto—an attitude too often confused by outsiders with indifference.

Jonathan writes without a shred of the sentimentality or softening of the dark edges of these people one might have excused him for exhibiting—which makes the light emitted on some occasions by the people he writes about even more dazzling: to him, to us. One senses that Jonathan himself is the learner here in coming to acknowledge the teaching they each have for him, their unconscious modeling of how to live a life, regardless of its conditions. The experiences he shares with them become very much give-and-take, and, as such, hold tremendous value for him. Gradually one realizes that his valuing of these people becomes, as it were, a kind of antidote for the cold-heartedness that has crept into our national life. It is an inherent respect that becomes a basis for real human sharing. And they respond by trusting his good will, come to value his willingness to listen, to record, to report out, even to share their sense of despair when it overtakes them, just as these things occur, without judgment or redefining. They sense his differences but clearly don't resent them. He in turn, by simply being there with them in all their suffering, by being allowed to share their agonies, is enabled thereby to take on a kind of nobility of spirit that matches their own, and thus becomes a party to their own healing.

In short, this is a deeply spiritual book. I myself feel profoundly uplifted by having read it and having thus shared Jonathan's own shared experience with his friends. I found myself crying often during the reading, but my tears were not so much the tears of pain as of a sense of deep recognition, and of celebration of the human spirit.

He ends his account thus:

... there has been more to this than research and, of course, I feel it now that I am really leaving.

> ***Mrs. Washington makes more coffee and we spend the rest of the evening talking about ordinary things that are entirely unrelated to the worries and the problems of the people in the neighborhood. We never had nights like this when we first met. A feeling of emergency was always in the air. Now, with the respite in her illness, she seems more at peace. Perhaps something has changed in me as well.***
>
> ***At two A.M., she walks with me to the East Tremont station. Then, however, because it's so late, she says she doesn't want me to go back by train and so she helps me to flag down a cab.***
>
> ***I have always told myself that I was here as a "researcher" of some sort, maybe a "social anthropologist" or an "oral historian," something of professional significance, that this was my job and I would do my best to get her words down right and be as faithful as I could to everything she told me. But there has been more to this than research and, of course, I feel it now that I am really leaving.***
>
> ***"God bless," she says. As usual, I feel afraid to say it in return. She gives me a hug, and although I often am embarrassed by my feelings, I hug her too, as closely as I can and suddenly feel panicky and don't want to let go. The taxi-driver makes a grumbling sound and seems impatient. I have never been good at knowing how to say goodbye.***

Do please read this book. It is an antidote for the coldness of American life, of the American heart, during these last years of the second millennium, C.E.

REVIEW:

EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY,

A Critique of National Goals, Standards and Curriculum

Edited by Ron Miller

Published by the Resource Center for Redesigning Education
PO Box 298, Brandon, VT (800) 639-4122
$18.95 (paper)

Reviewed by Chris Mercogliano

This excellent collection of essays represents a major and necessary collaboration between homeschoolers, alternative schoolers and more mainstream schoolers, both liberal and conservative. Their goal: to wake our dazed and slumbering nation up to the fact that what is currently being billed by the federal government as "Goals 2000" is not really a very good idea at all. If unopposed, according to the book's sixteen contributors, this major educational policy initiative will result in our permitting our government to shift educational autonomy even farther away from individual families and local communities, and will also enforce even higher levels of standardization and centralization—after having already exceeded anything but Orwellian limits decades ago.

But, states editor Ron Miller in his introduction, the book has a far deeper purpose than just the criticism of recently proposed national educational goals and standards:

> *This perspective recognizes that the institution of schooling suffers from (as well as perpetuates) the moral, cultural and epistemological faults of the modern era as a whole—faults that have led us to the brink of social disintegration and ecological catastrophe. In traditional cultures that supported a sustainable relationship between human society and the natural world for many centuries, education took place organically in the daily interactions between youths and adults. But in modern societies, education is no longer a natural, organic relationship between generations, rooted in a sense of place and a spiritually nourishing traditional wisdom. Largely confined to the highly formal institution of schooling, which is ultimately controlled by the powerful political force*

> ***of the state, education is thrust into a political context in which opposing values and ideologies contend for supremacy. The argument for educational freedom is, in large part, an effort to reclaim education as a nourishing, sustaining, organic relationship between generations.***

And so the book goes, as the assembled educational thinkers, leaders and practitioners put forth, each in his or her own way, a compelling series of ethical, moral, economic, and psychological arguments for the imperative of safeguarding educational freedom in America.

> ***It has to do with an old-fashioned word which John Taylor Gatto so eloquently resurrected ... at Goddard College this past summer. ... That word is liberty, and its future survival depends entirely on the will and the desire of this society to raise a generation of children who are truly equipped to think for themselves.***

Wrapped in a cover that bears more than a passing resemblance to our nation's flag, *Educational Freedom for a Democratic Society* contains, I think, a message which extends even deeper still. It has to do with an old-fashioned word which John Taylor Gatto so eloquently resurrected in a keynote speech given at Goddard College this past summer (see the *Journal of Family Life*, Fall, 1995, Vol. 2, No. 1). That word is *liberty*, and its future survival depends entirely on the will and the desire of this society to raise a generation of children who are truly equipped to think for themselves. Such children, in turn, will depend on the support of families to which they are truly bonded, and also of strong, autonomous local communities where real democracy is practiced and revered. It doesn't take a Ph.D. in anything but common sense to see that the rhetorical mumbo jumbo to be found in Goals 2000 will hardly work in favor of this preeminent goal, except in the most 1984-ish of ways.

Answer Ron Miller *et al*'s wake up call! Read this book!

DESCHOOLING OUR LIVES

Edited by Matt Hern

New Society Publishers
Gabriola Island, BC, Canada
$14.95 (US); $17.95 (Canada) paperback

Reviewed by Mary Leue

Properly speaking, Chris Mercogliano ought to be the one to review this book, but he is in it, so he says that would create bias. Ha! I doubt that there is any such thing as *lack* of bias when reviewing a book—but in this case, I know there isn't! No, I'm not saying, "Ignore my opinion"! Au contraire. Just try *not* to be biased when you read it! From its intro by Ivan Illich to the review by Pat Farenga, of John Holt Associates, on the back cover, you will find this book fits a niche which has until now been empty, and does it with style and discrimination. See? I told you I was biased. But read on, and you will learn why.

For openers, Ivan Illich has written a foreword which brings back vividly the philosophical ferment of the sixties and seventies and carries forward to our own times the thesis of that era. I find his reasoning even more relevant today than it seemed to me at that time. Like Illich, I believe that we still haven't really accepted the real significance of the "educational problem" he was trying to grapple with, right from the first. Only now do I feel as though I understood his thesis fully. And it is also clear to me—and to him—that because our problem has not been accurately defined, it has become catastrophic in size and in terms of the depth of its inroads into our culture. Illich explains his own process thus:

> ***I had questioned schooling as a desirable means, but I had not questioned education as a desirable end. I still accepted that ... educational needs of some kind were an historical given of human nature. I no longer accept this today.***

> ***[During] the year 1970 ... at the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, I gathered together some of the thoughtful critics of education (Paulo Freire, John***

> *Holt, Paul Goodman, Jonathan Kozol, Joel Spring, George Dennison, and others) to address the futility of schooling. ... I distributed drafts of essays that eventually became chapters of my book,* Deschooling Society. *...[M]any of the views and criticisms that seemed so radical back in 1970 today seem rather naive. ... I now realize that I was largely barking up the wrong tree. ... The book advocates the disestablishment of schools .... By disestablishment, I meant ... not paying public monies and ... not granting any special social privileges to ... school-goers.*
>
> *I called for the disestablishment of schools for the sake of improving education and here ... lay my mistake. Much more important ... was the reversal of those trends that make of education a pressing need rather than a gift of gratuitous leisure. ... [T]he social effects, and not the historical substance of education, were still at the core of my interest. I had questioned schooling as a desirable means, but I had not questioned education as a desirable end. I still accepted that ... educational needs of some kind were an historical given of human nature. I no longer accept this today.*
>
> *... I came to see ... that, increasingly, other forms of compulsory learning would be instituted ... by other tricks such as making people believe that they are learning something from TV, or compelling people to attend in-service training, or getting people to pay huge amounts of money in order to be taught how to have better sex, how to be more sensitive, how to know more about the vitamins they need, and so on. ...*
>
> *As I refocused my attention from schooling to education ..., I came to understand education as learning when it takes place under the assumption of scarcity in the means which produce it. The "need" ... appears as ... societal beliefs and arrangements which make the means ... scarce. And ... educational rituals reflected, reinforced, and actually created belief in the value of learning pursued under conditions of scarcity. Such beliefs, arrangements, and rituals, I came to see, could easily survive and thrive under the rubrics of deschoooling, free schooling, or homeschooling ... .*
>
> *... If the means for learning ... are abundant ... one does not need to make special arrangements for "learning." If, on the other hand, the means for learning are in scarce supply, ... [e]ducation then becomes an economic commodity, which one consumes, or, to use common language, which one "gets." ... If*

> ***people are seriously to think about deschooling their lives... I would like them to reflect on the historicity of these very ideas. Such reflection would take the new crop of deschoolers a step further from where the younger and somewhat naive Ivan was situated, back when talk of "deschooling" was born.***
>
> ***Ivan Illich, Bremen, Germany, Summer 1995***

That's a great start! But there's a lot more. Starting with Matt's own introduction, which he titles, "Kids, Community and Self-Design," the book is divided into sections—the first on what he calls the "roots" of education, which includes essays by Leo Tolstoy, Vinoba Bhave, Ivan Illich, and John Holt. This section creates a rich addendum to the educational histories John Gatto is so fond of outlining for us. Taken together, we can begin to put the whole picture together.

The second section includes what Matt entitles "Living Fully: More Recent Analysis," with contributions by Grace Llewellyn, John Taylor Gatto, Geraldine and Gus Lyn-Piluso and Duncan Clarke ("what can families do?"), Matt himself (on safety, also included in the first issue of the *Journal of Family Life*, Fall, 1995), Aaron Falbel (on real learning).

The third section, on homeschooling, includes articles by Donna Nichols-White (*The Drinking Gourd*), David Guterson, Susannah Sheffer (*Growing Without Schooling*, Holt Associates), Mark Douglas, Heather Knox, Heidi Priesnitz and Katharine Houk and Seth Rockmuller (AllPIE).

The fourth, which Matt calls, "Schools that ain't; places that work," has articles by Zöe Readhead on Summerhill (A.S.Neill's daughter, now the head of Summerhill School in England), Chris Mercogliano, on Albany's Free School, Mimsy Sadofsky on Sudbury Valley School, one on Matt's own Wondertree by Ilana Cameron, one on Windsor House by Meghan Hughes and Jim Carrico, and "liberating education," by Satish Kumar.

The last section is a potentially very useful reading and resource list of books, magazines and organizations for deschooling. Nowhere is Matt's open-hearted, open-minded ecumenism more in evidence than here—in contrast with some of the people involved with many actual organizations and learning communities, whether they call themselves schools, de-schools or home schools!

This is a fine new book to offer both students of education and desperate families looking for help with educational decision-making for their children. And it's cheap, too, as paperbacks go, at $14.95 for the US! Buy it! Matt tells us the New Society Publishers, unlike many of the large publishing companies, doesn't have much money to spend on marketing.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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SECTION V: Studies:

The following study was sent to me by my friend Carlos Bonilla, from Stockton, California, that indefatigable champion of the rights and welfare of minority children trapped within the bureaucracy of our educational system—in this case, a critical look at the relative success/failure of "special education" programs by four experienced teachers who have done their homework! Thanks to all of you!

FULL INCLUSION

by Rodney E. Machado M.S. Sp. Ed.
Anthony D. Belew M.S. Sp. Ed.
Michelle Jans M.S. Sp. Ed.
Allyn Cunha M.S. Sp. Ed.

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this article is to examine the use of full inclusion as an integral part of the current special education programs. Legal aspects affecting full inclusion are discussed as well as some practical implications. A brief background of the full inclusion movement and some current examples are given. Some suggestions for successful implementation of full inclusion are also outlined.

A survey addressed to teachers nationwide was conducted using the computer Internet. The results of the survey, which asked the question," Is full inclusion working?" are discussed.

THE FULL INCLUSION MOVEMENT

Similar to the Regular Education Initiative (R.E.I.) in the early 1900s, the full inclusion model is becoming widely accepted among educators. Like the R.E.I., full inclusion is controversial. On one side of the issue is a quickly diminishing population defending the status quo. On the other side are the full inclusionists who believe that full inclusion should be immediately implemented universally. As in the case with most movements, there are both extremists and those that are more pragmatic in their beliefs and approaches. Unfortunately, in the case of the full inclusion movement, it appears that the extremists have taken over the leadership.

The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps, On one side of the issue is a quickly diminishing population defending the status quo. On the other side are the full inclusionists who believe that full inclusion should be immediately implemented universally. As in the case with most movements, there are both extremists and those that are more pragmatic in their beliefs and approaches. Unfortunately, in the case of the full inclusion movement, it appears that the extremists have taken over the leadership.

The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps, (TASH), an organization primarily concerned about the rights and well being of children and adults with severe intellectual disabilities, is leading the charge for special education reform by advocating the elimination of special educators (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994). This well organized, articulate and politically connected organization has successfully influenced special education policy in states like New Mexico, Michigan, and many districts in California. The rallying cry for TASH is full inclusion for all persons with disabilities in all aspects of societal life (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994). It is their belief that by fully integrating all disabled students in the regular classroom, three important goals will be achieved:

- an improvement in social skills of all students across all school age groups
- an improvement in the attitude of the non-disabled students toward the disabled
- a fostering of the development of positive relationships and friendships between peers as a result of integration (Snel l, 1991) .

> *If regular education currently cannot serve the needs of an increasingly diverse student population such as Severely Emotionally Disturbed, Learning Disabled, and Multiply Handi-capped, forcing them to serve all students all of the time in one type of classroom is illogical."*

Those supporting the radical approach to full inclusion would measure success of integration on the sole basis of how tion is the root cause of much that is wrong with general education (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994). According to full inclusion advocates Stainback and Stainback (1991, 1992), "Special education has operated for so long that schools unfortunately do not know how to adapt and modify curriculum and instructional programs to meet diverse students' needs." To these advocates of full inclusion, eliminating special education would force general educators to serve children they have previously avoided or dumped into special education classes. If regular education currently cannot serve the needs of an increasingly diverse student population such as Severely Emotionally Disturbed, Learning Disabled, and Multiple Handicapped, forcing them to serve all students all of the time in one type of classroom is illogical. And while full inclusion advocates are quick to point out that specialists would be available in the fully mainstreamed classrooms to assist the regular classroom teacher, it remains unclear how such an arrangement would be organized. In addition, there also is a lack of empirical research suggesting that such a situation would be the best for all students.

Legal Issues

Full inclusion, a recent educational model that has grabbed the attention of educators over the past few years, is currently being implemented in many school districts across the United States. Although there remains no single definition of what full inclusion really means, essentially, it involves the total mainstreaming of Special Education students. Under most full inclusion plans, the Regular and Special Education teachers would collaborate their teaching efforts in one classroom. While there is a wide body of research that confirms the notion that increased mainstreaming can be valuable in improving the socialization skills of the disabled (Gartner and Lipsky, 1987), large pilot studies have not been done affirming increased academic performance for the disabled or regular student. The courts are similarly disjointed on how to respond to Full Inclusion. With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1975) or I.D.E.A.-B, it was clear that the need for more collaboration between special education and regular education was long overdue. With the concept of Least Restrictive Environment or L.R.E., no longer was special education to be an isolated institution. Inherent in the 1975 law was the idea that students would not be isolated in separate schools unless it could be proven that it was definitely to the student's benefit.

Since I.D.E.A., the courts have not definitively clarified what Least Restrictive Environment or what a "Free and Appropriate Public Education" should be. Although the Supreme Court has not received a case requiring it to interpret the concept of L.R.E., it has given us some guidance on Free and Appropriate Public Education (F.A.P.E.). In Hendrick Hudson School District vs. Rowley (1982), the Supreme Court interpreted F.A.P.E. to require specialized instruction and related services individually designed to provide education benefit to students with disabilities. In the Supreme Court case, however, the Court was not required to balance the benefits of inclusion in regular education settings against the benefits of specialized classes and services in separate settings (Huefer, 1994). The appellate courts have made more specific ruling regarding L.R.E. and disputes regarding F.A.P.E.. In a study of recent court cases regarding mainstreaming, Dixie Huefner (1994) examined several appellate decisions that dealt with the mainstreaming issue. In her paper, Huefner makes some very important conclusions on how the concept of full inclusion is faring in the courts. First, while the courts are increasingly supporting the idea of increased mainstreaming, no court has stated that the continuum of services be eliminated altogether, as some full inclusion advocates would desire. Additionally, Huefner (1994) points out that in fourteen of the appellate cases she examined, ten were won by the Local Education Agency, or L.E.A.. And in the ten cases won by a L.E.A., the placement was "more restrictive" than what the parent sought except when there was a dispute over public versus private placement. Further, in ten of the thirteen cases with a final decision, the state education agency's decision was upheld (Huefner, 1994). From these conclusions, it becomes very apparent that complete full inclusion does not have the support of the courts. Although many of the decisions the appellate courts have made want educators to provide spe-

> *First, while the courts are increasingly supporting the idea of increased mainstreaming, no court has stated that the continuum of services be eliminated altogether, as some Full Inclusion advocates would desire.*

cialized services in the regular classroom whenever possible, it is clear that private schools and segregated placement is sometimes still an option for some disabled students.

Another area the courts have delved into regarding the mainstreaming issue is that of cost of service per pupil. While I.D.E.A.-B does not raise the issue of cost considerations when determining placement of individuals with disabilities, some appellate court decisions have addressed the issue for the first time. In the Federal District Court case of Shannon M. vs. Granite School District (1992), the court ruled that for a medically fragile child, the nursing care required was in the medical realm, and did not require the school district to pay for the medical costs associated with mainstreaming this particular child in the regular classroom. In fact, the court determined that for this student, the L.R.E. was home schooling. Although cost was not specifically mentioned by the court as a rationale for their decision, there does appear to be a strong inference (Huefner, 1994). In Clevenger vs. Oakridge School Board (1984), cost was specifically mentioned. The court held that when given a choice between relatively equal placement, the local board is free to adopt the less expensive program. In fact, the district court for the southern District of Ohio went so far as the state in Matta vs. Board of Education (1990) that "When devising an appropriate program for individual students, cost concerns are legitimate." (Kubicek, 1994). Since there is precedent for the courts to establish limits for what a school district must spend in order to provide a free and appropriate education, full inclusion advocates will likely have some difficulties arguing for inclusion programs that advocate the use of special educators teaching collaboratively in the regular classroom if the cost exceeds current spending (Kubicek, 1994). Further, other federal courts have held that money spent on one child with a disability " should not be so great as to deprive other students of services they might need" (A.W. vs. Northwest Rhode Island School District, 1987). The courts have also given us some guidance on

When devising an appropriate program for individual students, cost concerns are legitimate.

defining some of the goals of mainstreaming. In determining placement decisions, special educators have for years considered the social, physical, academic, and emotional issues of disabled students.

However, many in the full inclusion movement have advocated the benefits of social mainstreaming as being more important than the possible academic benefits of segregated placement. While some court decisions have maintained that social mainstreaming is important, no case has indicated that this rationale alone supersedes all other criteria such as academic benefit. In the 1989 Fifth Circuit decision in the Daniel R.R. vs. State Board of Education, for example, the court required the disabled student to be mainstreamed to the "maximum extent appropriate, not the maximum extent possible." (Huefner, 1994). The decision has two qualifiers. First, the court is to determine whether the public agency or school district has attempted to accommodate an instructionally mainstreamed student by providing support services. (Huefner, 1994). If the answer is no, the law is violated. If the answer is yes, however, the court must examine whether the efforts to accommodate the student were sufficient. If efforts to accommodate are sufficient, separate or segregated placement is certainly appropriate. In this particular case, it was determined that Daniel, a student with Down's Syndrome, who was unprepared for a regular kindergarten class because he would require too much of the teacher's time and attention due to inability to handle the curriculum, could be satisfactorily mainstreamed socially by having lunch and recess with the regular student population. This decision hardly gives precedence for the extreme full inclusion philosophy.

> *... universal full inclusion is an idea whose time has not come.*

Finally, in order to change the current legal standards that allow for the continuum of services, the full inclusion advocates will have to prove to the courts that it is indeed beneficial to all students to have these services exclusively performed in the regular classroom. So far, there have been no extensive pilot

> *The schools that have implemented a successful inclusion program all share one common factor: extensive preparation.*

studies done that indicate that such an arrangement would improve the academic, social, or physical well being of both disabled and regular education students alike. Until this is done, universal full inclusion is an idea whose time has not come.

Making Inclusion Work

In 1986, in a report to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Assistant Secretary Madeline Will, challenged states, "to renew their commitment to serve (children with learning problems) effectively," and to "search for ways to serve as many of these children as possible in the regular classroom by encouraging special education and other special programs to form a partnership with regular education." (Ysseldyke, 1992). The movement toward full inclusion is attempting to meet that challenge.

The schools that have implemented a successful inclusion program all share one common factor: extensive preparation. This involves teachers, school staff, parents, administrators and students working as a team to develop a school-wide attitude of commitment and unity. In-service training and seminars on teaching methods and coping with the special needs student are held on a regular basis and parents are encouraged to attend meetings and to share information. In the *New York Times*, Susan Chira states that students in Redmond, an affluent suburb of Seattle, were given training in sensitivity before the special education students entered the room. In-service programs included team-teaching techniques that paired special education and regular education teachers. For two years, before implementing their inclusion program in Westerly, Rhode Island, educators "spent a great deal of time and effort building a strong school community partnership based on shared decision-making," states Logan, Westerly's Learning Lab Coordinator (*NEA*, Sept. 1994). Preparation and training must be comprehensive and complete before inclusion can take place and be successful.

Other major elements of a successful inclusion program include full support and encouragement from administrators.

Their assistance with scheduling, seminars and parent involvement is essential. Parents should also be encouraged to meet with professionals regularly (Haas, 1993) and invited to observe and participate in the classroom and to develop a rapport with teachers and staff through parent-teacher conferences and available seminars. And finally, financial provision is needed to provide instructional aides for additional support and assistance.

For inclusion to operate successfully, it is necessary for special education and regular education teachers to accept the responsibility for the education of all students in the classroom and work closely together using collaborative consultation and cooperative teaching.

Collaborative consultation is designed to provide effective and coordinated services for students with special needs by promoting communication, consultation, and planning between the special education and the regular education teachers. Cooperative teaching has been a key factor in successful inclusion programs and allows both special and regular education teachers to reside in the same classroom during the same instructional period. The teachers work together to plan their objectives and desired results for the entire class and for specific students. While one teacher may provide a unit of instruction for the class as a whole, most of the instruction time involves teachers working with individual students or with a small group of students (Bos and Vaughn, 1994).

Schools such as Johnson City in south-central New York, have made modifications and adjustments to the curriculum that have proven the idea that flexibility in the classroom provides all students with appropriate and valuable instruction. They make tapes of books for children who have trouble reading; add maps and charts for students who need visual presentation of information; alter tests, making answers multiple choice so that children who are unable to write may point to the correct answer. They also provide charts with numbers and letters for children who cannot speak and need to point to communicate, and most importantly, teachers set different goals for different students. For example, according to his ability, a student might receive a high score for learning only part of the material (*NYT*, May 19, 1993). What makes this program successful is that the special education and regular education teachers work closely together communicating and planning their instructional goals as a team.

Benefits of Inclusion

Full inclusion programs not only provide students with special needs a regular education classroom but also provide regular life experiences. As more inclusion programs become successful, segregation and separation in schools will begin to diminish. Robert Stoler, in his article in the Sept./Oct. 1992 issue of *Clearing House*, states, "Many experts in the field believe that students can assist one another based on their individual strengths and needs as well as develop friendships and interact with non-handicapped peers." For example, at Johnson City school, children are often seen assisting students in wheelchairs with their books while kindergarten children unselfishly take a break when another student needs to stop to breathe from an oxygen tank (*NYT*, May 19, 1993).

When disabled children are placed in classrooms with other students their own age, regular education students learn patience, develop an understanding toward students who learn differently, and acquire an attitude of respect for trying one' s hardest under difficult circumstances (Haas, 1993). Both self-esteem and behavior seem to improve in students with special needs as they are integrated with children of their own age who are without disabilities. Pat Poliziano's son Andrew has multiple disabilities. His exposure to a regular education first-grade classroom encouraged him to speak his first words—and he has since made new friends at Lincoln Elementary School in Johnson City. Mrs. Poliziano is quoted in the *New York Times* article of May 19, 1993, as saying, "He progresses better when he has an example."

Beyond the socialization benefits of students involved in an inclusion program are the learning environment advantages. All students are exposed to a variety of teaching methods and techniques that incorporate the many learning styles and skill strategies that often accompany special education. When she was a professor at the State University of New York at Binghamton, Christine Salisbury found the test scores of special education students and those of regular education students to have increased over a three year period when these students were placed in a classroom together (*NYT*, May 19, 1993).

According to Linda Morra, director of Education and Employment Issues for the General Accounting Office (GOA), she was a professor at the State University of New York at Binghamton, Christine Salisbury found the test scores of special education students and those of regular education students to have increased over a three year period when these students were placed in a classroom together (*NYT*, May 19, 1993).

According to Linda Morra, director of Education and Employment Issues for the General Accounting Office (GOA), the components for a successful inclusion program include:

- a collaborative learning environment
- a balanced proportion of students with disabilities in the classroom
- adequate support, including large numbers of aides
- training for classroom teachers
- a"philosophical orientation that defines special education as a service rather than a place" (Lewis, 1994)

With all the benefits of inclusion, there are still some students for whom inclusive education would not be appropriate or advantageous.

Full Continuum of Service

The Regular Education Initiative proposed in 1986 by former Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Madeline Will, has led to much debate over the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom and what form this inclusion will take. Many advocates of full inclusion contend that all students will benefit from the socialization received in the collaborative model of full inclusion.

The benefits of socialization through full inclusion for both regular and special education students are widely accepted. Although the implementation of full inclusion raises some questions, what preparations are necessary for the success of the collaborative model? is full inclusion appropriate for all students? and how will services be provided? Preparations necessary for success for the collaborative model were addressed earlier. The questions remain, is full inclusion appropriate for all students, and how to provide individual services?

There have been many studies of the use of full inclusion on students with mild disabilities, but very little data has been collected regarding students with severe or multiple disabilities, close proximity and facilitating socialization. Beyond socialization, there is little benefit for many severely disabled students in the full inclusion classroom.

To subject a developmentally delayed student with an age equivalent of four to a fifth grade history lesson, when they could be learning skills necessary for self care, is a disservice. It would be equally unfortunate to subject a fifth grade regular education student to a lesson dealing with life skills which they had mastered years earlier. Each student has totally different needs and this would not be the appropriate placement for this special education student. According to I.D.E.A., placement must be based on the individual needs of the student as described and specified in the I.E.P. If we were to put all special education students into regular classrooms, we would be limiting the student and teacher's ability to meet the I.E.P. goals in the appropriate setting. That is why it is necessary to provide a full continuum of services for special education students. Some proponents of full inclusion would see it replace the current system of special education, rather than accentuate it. This would be disastrous for many students.

...federal law requires schools to offer both a free appropriate education and an education in the least restrictive environment. The key word is appropriate....

Robert Davila, Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitation Services said, "Federal law requires schools to offer both a free appropriate education and an education in the least restrictive environment. The key word is appropriate inclusion as a means toward offering a free appropriate education. It's not a goal". The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (N.J.C.L.D.) maintains that full inclusion is a violation of parents' and students' rights when it is defined as serving students only in the regular education classroom. The N.J.C.L.D. supports the use of a continuum of service options including full inclusion, specialized classes, pullout services, and combinations of service. Decisions regarding placement of students with disabilities must be based on the individual needs of the student as determined by the cooperative effort of the I.E.P. team.

> *Full inclusion then becomes one of many service delivery systems, instead of the only one. (OSOSE)*

The United States Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services has reaffirmed its commitment to the availability of a full continuum of alternative placements. Full inclusion then becomes one of many service delivery systems, instead of the only one; thus providing appropriate services to those who are not best served in the full inclusion classroom. With the full inclusion class as the least restrictive system in the continuum, it would be a possible goal to place students in the full inclusion classroom eventually, but it would not mandate the placement of a student who needed specialized service. An example might be an emotionally disturbed student who was unable to function in the regular education class which led to certification for Special Education Service. To put this student back into the environment in which they were unable to succeed instead of a special class with a behavior modification system, small groups and more direct conduct supervision would be illogical. Eventually the student might return to the regular education classroom, first through part-day mainstreaming, then perhaps through full inclusion. Most importantly, the student could immediately benefit from specialized services. All of these decisions would be based on the students' individual needs.

> *We must...remember the idea behind full inclusion is to benefit students, not to save money.*

The decision of who would be most appropriately be served in the full inclusion classroom would come from the I.E.P.S. team, Educators, Psychologists, Parents and Students. To facilitate the success of students in full inclusion classrooms, a teacher support team can be formed to assist and maintain students in the regular education setting. The team would operate similarly to the student study team, making suggestions or supporting the teacher in helping students reach I.E.P.S. goals. This forum could also consult on moving students from specialized service to full inclusion.

Unfortunately, budget concerns seem to have become paramount in the argument over full inclusion. By replacing current systems and making full inclusion the only service delivery model, schools can save money. We must resist this temptation and remember the idea behind full inclusion is to benefit students, not to save money. The only way to maximize this is through a full continuum of services.

Full Inclusion Survey from the Internet

We performed a membership search using the key words "teacher" and "educator." There were over five hundred teacher/educator E-mail addresses found. Online profiles were checked to ensure that those receiving the surveys were actually educators. Surveys were sent to about four hundred teachers all over the United States during a four-week period.

The survey results were broken down into four categories:

- Full inclusion is working
- Full inclusion is not working
- No opinion
- Do not know what full inclusion is

> *41% said that full inclusion is not working. The majority of these teachers had not been prepared and/or had no support.*

25% of those polled said that full inclusion is working. Out of these, 25% all said that they had been prepared and had the support needed to make full inclusion work. **41% said that full inclusion is not working. The majority of these teachers had not been prepared and/or had no support.** 14% said they basically had no opinion; most of these people had heard of full inclusion but did not know enough to answer the question. 20% did not know what full inclusion was.

The following are a few quotes elicited from teachers nation- wide on the Internet survey.

Pros

" Inclusion works when teachers want it to work."

"In the school where I teach, a very large metro school, full inclusion

is working. There are some problems, but they are isolated. ... There is some evidence that the better students are hampered by the plan. "

"Yes, full inclusion is working, if facilitated properly with a trained educator—who believes !"

"In my opinion, inclusion of all students into the learning environment is preferred and possible if all teachers are adequately trained and are skilled enough to deal with such a diverse and challenging classroom environment. "

"I find implementation difficult but rewarding if the proper preparation has taken place.... Critical to its success is the communication of realistic goals and methods to set appropriate short term objectives with time lines."

Cons

"No, but that's partly because it's being badly implemented in many places."

"It is terribly unfair to the rest of the class if the teacher is spending all of his/her time on one child."

"Full inclusion is just another way to toss all children into the same box."

"Inclusion is often an excuse to save money and gain favor with the powers that be and rarely used as a tool to help or assist students. "

"I'm very frustrated that so much of our time, energy, and money goes for the slower or problem child, and little attention is given to the normal ones."

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Halloween pumpkin

SECTION VI: *Reviews:*

BOOK AND AUDIOTAPES

Reviewed by Chris Mercogliano

Here is the first in a series of "factory tested" reviews of books, tapes and learning materials produced for kids; the factory, of course, being our own Free School, home to 45 or so free-thinking and discerning children.

Boomerang! is an award-winning (*Parents Choice, Utne Reader, American Library Association*) monthly audiomagazine for kids 6-12 with a circulation of over 30,000. Part news magazine, part theater and part radio show, each 70-minute issue is written by a team of adults under the direction of creator David Strohm, founder of the Listen and Learn Company, and is very energetically performed by kid reporters ages 9-13.

Strohm apparently got the idea for *Boomerang!* when his 8 year-old daughter questioned him incessantly about the fall of the Berlin Wall. As a result, each issue of the magazine now deals with at least one significant current event, as well as containing nature and science reports, environmental news, jokes and lengthy stories, both of the mythological and the mystery/detective variety.

Earlier this year, I introduced *Boomerang!* to a roomful of Free Schoolers of various ages with the simple invitation: listen to this and let me know what you think. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with kids 8,9 &10 appearing to enjoy it the most. I have since set up a subscription swap between *ΣΚΟΛΕ* and *Boomerang!*; and now, our kids eagerly await the arrival of each new issue. Personally, I found the show a tad too "Disneyized" for my taste; but, overlooking my own stylistic (and ageist?) bias, I found the material to be consistently interesting, relevant and well-presented; and as I said, the kids loved it. My favorite segment thus far has been a dramatized rendition of an "interview" with martyred Brazilian rubber tapper-turned-activist Chico Mendez which provided the kids with an understanding of the socio-economic roots of the ongoing ecological catastrophe in the rainforest as well as a dramatic story of extraordinary heroism, leaving them with the message: may our heroes not have died in vain.

And so I heartily recommend this excellent alternative to television. A 12-month subscription to *Boomerang!* is available for $39.95 from Listen and Learn Home Education, 13366 Pescadero Rd. La Honda, CA 94020, (800) 333-7858.

Nice to finally have access to a science "textbook" produced by a poet, writer and former teacher. Thanks to Kelly Ruef of Seattle, WA, *The Private Eye* is a most unique approach to the study of science. Actually, it is not some didactic crutch for a course of instruction at all. Instead, it arms students with a jeweler's loupe and begins each lesson with open-ended instructions to observe various dimensions of the world around them. They are then encouraged to combine the visual data provided by the loupe with thinking by analogy until they begin to form their own theories based on their own personal observations. Thus, the study of science becomes an active practice of the scientific method based on individual and group discovery, rather than a passive rehashing of its results based on reading and memorization—the basis for most elementary and junior high school science programs.

The Private Eye succeeds beautifully in honoring the mystery which thankfully remains inherent in the natural world. It is entirely based on an interdisciplinary approach to science, and each unit ends with a series of excellent suggestions for poems, essays and short stories.

Free School students have been experimenting with *Private Eye* all Fall, and my only regret is that we don't have more loupes to go around. The manual is extremely well put together and the kids love the adventures on which it sets them out. May the *Private Eye* eventually replace all of the science textbooks in the kingdom!

The Private Eye is available from The Private Eye Project, 77103 1st Ave., N.W., Seattle, WA 98117.

And finally we have three exceptional books for elementary-age kids, all dealing with what is popularly known today as multicultural issues, written by Margy Burns Knight, illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien and published by a small press in Gardiner, Maine, Tilbury House, specializing in children's books:

Talking Walls, 36 pages softcover (large format), $8.95
Who Belongs Here, An American Story, 36 pages, hardcover, $16.95
Welcoming Babies, 36 pages hardcover, $14.95

I have read all three to Free School students more than once with much pleasure and learning all around. Give the favorite's nod (both mine and the kids') to *Talking Walls.* This magnificently illustrated book was inspired by the author's visit to the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C. In it she takes us on a moving tour of some of the world's major cultures, past and present, via their most significant walls.

And yes these walls do speak. From the prehistoric paintings on the walls of the Lascaux caves in southern France to the walls which once imprisoned Nelson Mandela for twenty-six years in Johannesburg, every powerful page of *Talking Walls* delivers an important message best expressed by the famous line from Robert Frost which appears on the book's title page:

> *Before I built a wall I'd ask to know*
> *What I was walling in or walling out...*

The first time I read *Talking Walls* to a group of Free Schoolers, it precipitated an hour-long discussion about the diverse cultures which met our eyes and ears. Indeed, the author has come up with a truly unique route into the examination of ways in which cultures are different and ways they are the same. Her prose is clean and crisp and her choice of images superb. *Talking Walls* also comes in a Spanish translation.

In *Who Belongs Here, An American Story,* Margy Burns Knight once again opens a window into other cultures, this time by telling a modern-day immigrant's story. Nary, a Cambodian boy who managed to escape the Khmer Rouge killing fields by being carried through the jungle to Thailand on his grandmother's back, eventually ends up in New York City with his grandparents. Along the way, the author reminds us of the countless millions from other cultures who once passed through Ellis Island, as she expertly weaves their stories of past poverty, war and famine into Nary's.

At one point Nary is called a "chink" by one of his classmates, and told to go back where he came from, and this leads to an examination of the reality that ours is truly a nation of immigrants. Then the question is posed: if we were all forced to go back home, just who would be left? I was encouraged here to see how deftly and appropriately Margy Burns Knight was able to emphasize the importance, both past and present, of Native American culture to the rich multicultural and uniquely American fabric which continues to evolve today.

Who Belongs Here, An American Story goes on to deal—in a refreshingly straight-on and mature way—with the social, political, economic and personal realities involved with the issue of immigration. The author neither talks down to children nor needlessly overcomplicates basic human themes. These are rare books.

Finally, in *Welcoming Babies*, a simple and absolutely beautiful book, Margy Burns Knight once again makes the rounds of the world's most common cultures by describing their different traditions for welcoming new babies into the world. I particularly liked the fact that the author leaves it up to her readers to figure out which ethnic group is which, and the kids whom I have read the story to and I have been having a lot of fun doing just that.

All three of the books end with several pages of informative notes which provide additional information for those interested. And while I've never been much for Teacher's Guides, an excellent one accompanies *Who Belongs Here, An American Story*. Though never too fond of the "c-word" either, I think these three books by Margy Burns Knight belong at the center of every elementary school social studies curriculum in America.

* * * * *

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF POCAHONTAS
by Jean Fritze
The Trumpet Club Publications
666 Fifth Ave, New York, NY, 10103, 1983

Reviewed by Leslie Cassano, East Hill School

Jean Fritze, unlike the Disney Studios, writes *The Double Life of Pocahontas* with help from the history books. The story begins in the early 1600's. Pocahontas is an eleven-year-old, daughter of the great chief Powhatan. The English have just arrived in Chesapeake Bay after four months at sea.

Parental discretion is advised for younger readers. I would recommend this for early adolescents up through high school. Another word of caution: this is not a fairy tale, love story, or fantasy. Fritze tells the story through the eyes of both the English and the native Americans, and it is a realistic and often grim tale. It is also an historical account, written with the help of the Institute of Early American History and Culture. Children should be guided through this biography. Open-ended discussions about "war," "power," and "guns" might be helpful. The book would be appropriate as part of a Native American study, and there is much useful and challenging information poured into its 96 pages. (I was pleased to find an epilogue, a map of Jamestown, a bibliography, and an index, all of which are helpful and serious resources for the proper age group).

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL OPENING

I'm opening an Alternative School in lower New York or Western Connecticut! I have had eight years experience running an internationally known one room schoolhouse, and have learned a lot from visionaries such as Gatto, Holt, Montessori. My vision is ten acres in the country with a lake and plenty of grandparents and infants spending time with us.

For more information, Page: Brian Kersey at 914-973-4400

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SECTION VII: *Humor*

From **POPULAR MECHANICS** *for January, 1936. This piece was sent to us by Dr. Alan Bonsteel, who is a contributor to* **SKOLE**. *See his article on "Schools as Communities" in the Summer, 1995 issue.*

FISH HAVE POWER TO REASON BUT ARE "DUMB" IN SCHOOL

If you want to find a smart fish, don't look for it in school. Fish have an ability to reason and to cope with changing environment and certain species, particularly those that do not go in schools, have a well-regulated family life, like the birds. This is the conclusion of Mrs. Horst von der Goltz, New York aquarist, who has given fish intelligence tests and observed them for many years. She says she never has found any fish without some degree of adaptability and all have a certain degree of intelligence or ability to learn by experience and to change an established habit in order to cope with a new situation. Some even are able to teach this acquired knowledge to others. Fish that travel in schools are the "dumbest" of all because they are controlled by mob action.

The most intelligent fish found by this observer are the cichlids, found in South America, Africa, Madagascar and India. They range in size from dwarfs of one inch to those of up to eight and ten inches. They take care of their young, teach them to swim, wash them, feed them, put them to bed at sundown, make them get up in the morning for breakfast.

In captivity, at least, these fish are strictly monogamous and widows and widowers are faithful to their departed mates. As the babies begin to swim the parents in pantomime warn them against the dangerous animals and plants and the glass in the tank. The young are put to bed shortly before nightfall. By turning on lights at a certain time and turning them off at a designated time each day, the parents soon learned the schedule and gathered their young for bed about half an hour before "taps."

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EDITORS' PAGE

Hey, guys. Here's the spring kids' issue. It's terrific! All sorts of kids' stuff! Great stuff! Only one problem, and I can't even really mention it, but I can promise that if you keep reading the other kids' and your own stuff, page after page, eventually you're going to hit

IT

so please don't forget that I warned you! Sorry, but that's all they will allow me to tell you. I just hope IT doesn't drain your brain. Because if I were to hear from someone who knows you that all of a sudden you just sort of went limp and never smiled again or even did your homework—hoo boy, would I feel guilty.

So read slowly, and that way perhaps you can sluff off some of the effect. Well, at least, watch your step, OK? See, it's sort of like a drug that warps your thinking about everything, or maybe it's like standing on a floor and all of a sudden it falls in and drops you down into a dark hole, pitch black and no way out!

Or maybe the trouble is that I've been reading one of Bruce Coville's latest about Ron Allbright versus BKR, and it ends badly, so maybe I'm feeling insecure about the future. Hey, he gets his Dad back—well, sort of—but he almost loses Snout, and his whole life is changed in a way that you know is never going to change back again. Scary! Hm. I haven't read Jean George's sequel to *Julie of the Wolves* yet—it's called *Julie*—but knowing her, I'm pretty sure it'll be upbeat. I'm still looking for a new Susan Cooper. Anyone know of anything she's done since the *Rising of the Dark* series?

Well, anyway, watch your step. No, no letter bomb, just words and pictures, but still ... Love, Mary

Here's a letter we got from Arthur Morgan School, 1801 Hannah Branch Rd., Burnsville, SC 28714:

To the Editor of *ΣΚΟΛΕ*:

Hi! I'm the English teacher at AMS and am sending some of my students' poetry for submission in your journal. Joyce Johnson, our development coordinator and longtime staff member, passed along your journal (Spring, 1995, Vol. XII, No. 2) to me to spark topics for discussions in my classes. One of the classes saw that Amelia Brommer, an AMS graduate, had submitted a story and that other students had submitted poetry, so they decided to see if you'd publish them in your next publication. The story behind the poems is that they emerged out of a "free writing" session one rainy October day in English class and were then read aloud by each poet and discussed at length by the class. Each poem represents a different perspective on the same day of rain, and the poems are meant to be taken together as a whole.

I hope these reach you in time and I hope you might be able to consider including them in the next edition of *ΣΚΟΛΕ!* ... Thanks for taking the time to look at our material.

Sincerely,
Shan Overton

The pieces Shan sent written by his students start on the next page. They're beautiful! Thanks, kids and Shan. Keep sending me your writings!

THE RAIN STORM
by Laura Jordan, 7th grade

Pitter, patter, titter, tatter, at first. Here comes the rain again. It comes pounding on the roof, and tapping on the windows. The wind is blowing, the rain is pouring hard. It comes and goes, but then comes again harder, and twice as loud. The rivers and streets are flooding. The wind is howling and blowing harder and harder. And the rain is coming. Pitter, patter, just at first, but then it's banging, pounding. Pounding with the wind, and its force and strength.

RAIN
by Conrad Kochek, 9th grade

The gusts of rain hit the window sill. As I watch from inside my house I can hear the lovely sounds of rain. I can see the wind push the rain back and forth . The trees sway in the wind. I see little birds huddling next to their mothers trying not to be blown away by the big gusts of wind. My body is wrapped in a blanket of warmth. Then after the rain the sun comes out and everything is sparkling and shining. The beautiful little birds are fluttering around. I feel all warm inside because the sun has come out.

RAIN

by Agnes Bell Wetteroth, 8th grade

Drizzling and grey the sky is cold, light refracted, a thousand rainbows on each leaf or stem. water falls, sky is bright with a thousand drops of reflected light.

THE CREATOR, THE DESTROYER

by Will Senechal, 7th grade

Rain, the essense of everything, it can express anything, happiness or sadness, hate or love, with its pattering drops striking randomly on the earth. The wind gusting it into new and unexplored places. Underneath any shelter, through any wall with time. A great immovable force, small but patient, after relentless years of steady pounding, it creates wonders, and destroys them. Sometimes warm, sometimes cold, sometimes soothing, sometimes violent. All creatures stay in shelter during rain, some in awe of the sweeping force, covering miles and miles, some cowering from the wet, some ignoring it all.

RAINY DAYS

by David Delcourt

It is a day, clouded over of course. I am standing outside, standing for a reason I know not, standing watching as that grey, shapeless man up in the sky eats up the big, shining, yellow orange. Suddenly the grey man realizes what he has done and breaks down in tears. Pitter, patter, pitter, patter, faster and faster come the tears of this strange grey man. I do not move exept for the rise and fall of my chest. All of a sudden that grey man starts sobbing. Baboom, baboom, the sobbing creates a single steamy tear on my already wet cheek. It starts as a small droplet and is slowly joined by the tears of the grey man. Slowly other tears form in my eyes and they are joined by the tears of the grey man. I begin to sob along with the grey man. My features start to turn pale with grief, sorrow, and sadness. Now it seems as if I, I of all people, am crying along with this now seeming old and wrinkled grey man. I start walking slowly solemnly away. My crying never ceasing. Tears falling on the bare ground mingle with the pitter, pattering of rain. My solitary procession meanders its way outside the gates, with grief, sadness, and sorrow still clinging on for dear life!

WITH ROSES

by Claire Senseney, 9 th grade

pitter-pat on the purple petals of petunias
splat on the silvery slimness of filling stations nationwide
covering cloudless caravanners with cold blankets
rain
thriving, twisting, turning, tumultous, troublesome
rain
wet and wide-eyed; wallowing; wilting; willing
tender touch and tender eyed; tapping
rapping and rapturous; rampant and, and,
nothing.....
nope nothing quite like
the rain on a cloudy summer day
rapping on windows, tapping on flowers
rampant among the gardens
of spring planted
by me
the wide-eyed and wondering
rain
in the black of night the owl calls
echoing in the drops
meandering and meaningless
rain
why on the day of the wedding
my wedding with roses.

From East Hill School Kids' Newsletter from last summer:

If you have never been to summer camp at East Hill, your in for a big treat. My favorite thing to do is pottery. You can make all kinds of things. I made a dish on the wheel. I created a new kind of animal. I also made a pinch pot using just my hands and not the wheel. The clay we used was red clay. I used a knife to cut some squares. On the squares I made a picture using press designs.

We also go on walks. When you go on a walk you eat snack and then you go home. You can do woodworking and pottery and play outside. We have two cows and one of them had a calf on the Fourth of July; her name is Firecracker.

We have two baby goats. They are 6 weeks old. There names are Sally and Sadie. Sally has the most black on her and Sadie is the smallest.

We are making a play structure. Sam Cap. is going to make a makd* under the stage. We will use the stage for plays. There will be a tower on top of the structure. There will be climbing ropes and ladders. All of the kids are in charge of making the structure. The structure will be cool to play on.

We also have a big sand pile. We've been digging big tunnels and putting water through the tunnels. There is a big big tent next to the sand pile. About forty feet away there are two tire swings hanging from a white ash tree.

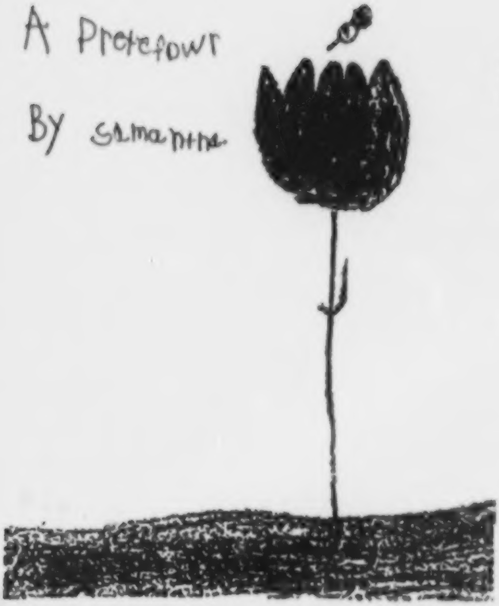
East Hill Camp is the "funnest" camp I have ever been to, and July 12 is my birthday.

by Kelsey Marston

**Sorry, Kelsey, I couldn't read that word. Write me and tell me what I missed and I will put it in the next kids' issue. And keep writing in your newsletter! It helps us know what East Hill School/Camp is really like! Thanks.*

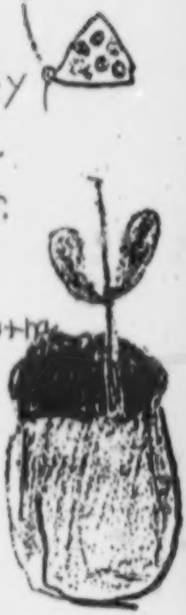
A Pretefowr

By samantha



A Butterfy on a Flowr.

By samantha



Here follow a group of varied writings by three Leues: Oliver, Madeline and Ian .

By Oliver Leue:

Nature's Gifts

We give greeting and thanks to fire
whithin it is a force that sustains life
Fire gives us warmth, energy, and cooked food

Fire was dancing
Emanating heat with bright red and yellows
Deer meat brown in flame

We give greetings and thanks for earth
Within it is a force that sustains life
Earth gives us wood, clean water, and animals

Earth is beautiful
Small plants growing into huge trees
Animals drinking and eating the earth's creations

We give greetings and thanks to water
Within it is a force that sustains life
Water quenches our thirst, cleans our bodies, and restores our soul

Water is flowing
Its graceful entrancing beauty
Always moving

The Moon Landing the Government Doesn't Want You to Know About:

[MOON STUFF]

In 1970, a moon probe lands on the moon. Inside three humans sit. As a door opens two of them step out. As they walk around the one inside scans the area. The two outside pick up rock samples. As they collect, the person inside warns them that they are straying to far from the probe. Suddenly, a cord breaks. One of the people are disconnected, just in time to hear the warning. He walks around looking for the probe. He wanders around for what seems like hours. He catches sight of something and runs over to it. As he gets closer, he sees it is not the probe, it is the American flag. He knows the probe had landed west of it, but he didn't were west was. He took a guess and started walking. After what seemed like ages he sees the flag again. He was walking around in a circle. He remembers that he has a 2 way radio in his helmet. He tries it. He only gets static.

Back at the probe, the people are trying to reach there lost comrade. They try a tracking device on an overhead screen. A light flashes. They see he is on the other side of they moon. They use a moon rover and go looking for him. As the lost person comes around the corner, his 2 way radio starts working. He calls for help and hears his partners answering. He is rescued but is running out of Air. Just as he loses consciousness, he is saved. It is ~~all over.~~ They head home.

THE BLUE ROSE

When I was about 5 my father told me the story of a rose. A blue rose. The rose would bloom every 100 years or so and if someone picked it that person would go insane. By the time I was 20 I had forgotten the story. I was in my 3rd year of college and my life was great.........until the day I went walking in a nearby feald. I was walking with a girl named Christine and was planing to marry her.that day O was going to propose. I decided to pick her a bouquet of flowers but none were in sight. Then out of the corner of my eye a saw it. A beutifull blue rose. I quickly ran over to it picked it and ran back to Christine. Emedeatly when I gave it to her I remembered the stories. It all suddenly rushed back into my memory. I suddenly had an uncontrolable impulse to run. I didn't stop until I got home.

That night I thought of many things. The rose, Christine, the stories. I started hallucinating things. I saw Christine lying dead on the floor of my kitchen looking very mutilated with me standing over her laughing. At that exact moment I fainted.

When I woke I was in my camber, in my bed. I had absolutely no idea how I had gotten there. The previous night suddenly came rushing back into my mind. It all seemed jumbled.

That evening I forgot the rose and invited her over. When she got to my house I thought she looked beutifull. Her long blond hair. Her baby brown eyes. Then and only then did I notice it. Pined in her hair was a blue rose. I BURST into a fit of rage yelling and screaming. Cursing our creator and worshiping the dark prince. I grabed Christines hair, draged her to the stove, turned a nob and destroyed Christine and the rose in one stroke. I stood there laughing not knowing what I had done until I looked down. Christine lay there dead. I droped to my knees and cried.

That night her father came over for diner. Christines parents were divorced and her father was a mean old man. I was quite amazed at how calm I was.

Every thing went great until he started talking about Christine. I could feel my self go pail. My blood froze and my heart almost stopped. I started to feel my rage and anger growing. I thought I must ether kill him or I would kill myself. When her father asked if I was feeling well I exploded into a fit. I suddenly despised every thing. I smashed the dishes on the ground and through my self on him. Now you may think that I beat him but there you are wrong. He some how over powered me, pushed me the the ground and held my hands behind my back. I kicked and wiggled but with no prevail. I finally gave up struggling. Her father wasn't an extremely nice person, but trusting. He let me go and I grabed for his throut. It was easy for me to drag him to the ground and strangle him. The 70 year old had no friends or live relatives except Christine.

Both Christine and her father I baried in my cellar. No one has asked about Christin's father for 10 years and if they asked me about Christine I would say that she left me and moved someware. I am sane now and I hope I will be for the rest of my life.

Moon

Moon beams shining down
Striking the earth and people
Lighting up the night

Mother

Kind, warm, and gentle
Mother caring and guiding
Protecting, hellping

Death

Darkness nothingness
life itself gone forever
never to wake up

Middle School

When will I be free from this *hell*. Why am I stuck here. People with power , powerless. Strong dominating meek. Where is the justice. Why do they try to control us. Try to have power over us.

We will survive, though. We will rise to power. Never again to fall. Never again.

WAR

MADNESS, VIOLENCE , SCREAMING, BLOOD. WAR TORN FAMILIES RIPPED OPEN BY SHRAPNAL. SHOT DYING.... DEAD. PEOPLE SHOUTING KILL, DESTROY. EVERYONE IS MAD.

SILENCE, ACID RAIN, RED EARTH. IT IS OVER. WE BEGIN ANEW. NEVER AGAIN.

THE MADNESS HAS STOPPED. PEOPLE LOST NEVER TO SEE DAY AGAIN. IT HAS ENDED. WE ARE ALIVE.

LIFE IS STARTING. IT STARTS AGAIN.

IF I GAVE CRYSTAL A MARKER*

by Madeline Leue

What would she do?
I would show her first
Would she do it too?

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* *Madeline tells us her cat's name is Crystal.*

Ian's writings (from last year) as a homeschooler:

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies have amazed people for years and only recently have we discovered much information. For instance, until about 100 years ago it was thought that caterpillars were made of morning dew. Also there are many beliefs of where the word butterfly came from. Here are just a few: some people believe that butterflies are called butterflies because they "flutter by," another belief is that they were thought to be fairies who stole butter, yet another group believes that it is because of a yellow color on some species' wings. Ether way they are all logical.

Butterflies, like all insects, have six legs, attached to the thorax, that, believe it or not, can smell, four wings, also on the thorax, which are made up of millions of microscopic scales of every color. They have a head, a middle body part called a thorax, a lower body part called an abdomen, antennae, and a special tongue called a proboscis, which is like a long straw that curls up under the mouth when not being used. Their eyes can detect ultra violet colors that we can't see. Many butterflies are decorated with these colors.

Butterflies, like all beings, have distinct behaviors that only they use. For instance, butterflies uncurl the before mentioned proboscis and insert it into a flower to suck up the nectar. At night they will sleep on a stalk of grass or a tree branch with their wings folded up around them. They will return to the same place each night.

There are two ways butterflies court: perching and patrolling. Perching is when the male perches on a place where the female is apt to go. If he sees something that looks like the female, most likely it's another species of butterfly because butterflies have bad eye sight for distance. In fact it might be you! In any case, if it is a female of his species, then he starts actively courting. If not he goes back to watch. The other method is patrolling which is when the male flies until he finds the female and then again starts actively courting. Also, you might find many butterflies huddled around on a dirt road. Why? When puddles form and then evaporate on the dirt road it concentrates minerals on the road. Males use their proboscis to suck these minerals. Why do they want them? Because when mating they distribute a pack of these minerals. When laying eggs the female will need them.

In the fall the Monarch butterfly will migrate all the way from Canada to Mexico. In the spring some make the long journey back to Canada. In the meantime they lay their eggs and as follows is their children's lives till adulthood. Every butterfly starts as an egg. 5-10 days later he hatches as a caterpillar. While constantly eating he starts to grow. Meanwhile, he sheds 4-6 times and after approximately 2-4 weeks he transforms to a pupa. 10-15 days later he emerges as a butterfly and has to wait for his wings to dry.

Butterflies are masters of disguise. The Monarch is in a group of bad tasting butterflies. Birds that have tried to eat them have remembered it and stay away. Sometimes a species of butterfly will adapt to look like a bad tasting butterfly. The bird stays away even though it's really his favorite snack. Caterpillars sometimes also adapt, such as the Buckeye caterpillar, to look like a snake. Same results. Some butterflies have fake eyes to fool their enemy so they don't know where to attack. A Hairstreak butterfly not only has fake eyes, it also has a tail that looks convincingly like antennae. The Hairstreak butterfly also has, unappetizing as it seems, a chrysalis that looks like a pile of bird droppings.

Butterflies are animals like like no others. They have their own ways of living, of getting food, and of staying alive. They are an amazing kind of creature.

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World Book Encyclopedia, 1960.

AN ACID/BASE TESTER

Materials you will need:

Purple cabbage
1 cup hot water
Eye dropper
Pencil or pen
Glass cup
1 cup measuring cup
Blender
White paper plate
Aluminum foil or cookie tray
Teaspoons

Items for testing (basically anything, but here are some ideas): Ammonia, Soap, Vitamin C, Orange Juice, Baking Powder, Vinegar.

What to do:

Take some purple cabbage, the outside dark leaves are best, and chop until fine. Squish it in the one cup measurer, if it comes up to the full cup as hard as you can squish, don't add anymore. If it doesn't chop up and add more. Once you have it to the one cup mark dump it all in the blender and add a cup of the very hottest water your tap will give.

Blend at "chop" in the blender until it's a mushy purple mess inside the blender cup. Let set for 10 minutes.

While it is setting, find a workspace, put the cookie tray or aluminum foil on it, and set out the substances you want to test. Set out a paper plate and draw lines evenly to divide it so there are enough spaces for the amount of materials you want to test. Label each one for the different substances.

Once 10 minutes is up (you should be using a timer for this) take the blender and pour all of the water out into a glass cup. Make sure none of the chopped up cabbage leaves come too. Take your eyedropper and make sure it's clean. If it is, you're ready to start.

If it is a powder that you're trying to test, take a teaspoon and put a little on the space where the label is of that substance. Take the eyedropper and add a few drops of the purple cabbage water. Wait a few minutes for a reaction. Do this with all the rest of the substances you wish to test.

If it is a liquid take a clean teaspoon and put a few drops of it in the space than add the purple cabbage water. Make sure the eyedropper doesn't touch the substance you're going to test!

After you're done:

Look at the now brightly colored paper plate. Why does it turn these colors? Because of the acid and base. This means that everything that has a lot of acid in it turns very red or pink. If it has a good deal of acid in it, but not a very lot it turns a regular pink. If it is a base substance it will turn greenish or bluish. Lots of base- dark green or blue, regular amount of base- light green or blue. If it is a balance of base and acid then it will stay purplish.

If you want to make Litmus papers take a sheet of copy paper, cut it in strips, and dip it in purple cabbage water. Let dry on tin foil.

When done dip a Litmus paper in the thing you want to test (you can only use liquids.) and the Litmus paper will turn the colors above.

CHEESE
(or a really easy whey* of making it)

To begin with you need (as you probably guessed) milk. If you don't have cows, goats will be all right.

You take 16 cups of milk and put it into a large steel pot then turn the fire on low. Very low. Stir the milk and check the heat every once in a while (with a stove thermometer) until it gets to 180 degrees. Then put your spoon aside and take 1/4 cup of vinegar and slowly pour it in. Start stirring again and watch carefully. After a while it should, if not add a little more vinegar, make little clumps known as curds. If you are wondering what they taste like you can try some, they taste quite good.

Once that has happened, take everything that you have in the pot and pour it into a colander with a cheesecloth on top and a pot below. As soon as you have poured it in, the curds should stay in the cheesecloth while the whey, which is the yellow orangeish watery stuff which is left of the milk with the curds in it, should sift through into the metal pot. Once the pot is about halfway full you should take the colander and put it in the other pot you were heating up the milk in and take they other pot which is now halfway full of whey and pour all of it into a container, not tin or cast iron.

Take the colander and put it back in the pot and keep on letting the whey go in. After a while of letting it sit, which is what you should have been doing, you should have (in the cheese cloth) this stuff that looks sort of like ricotta.** If you want it to be a harder cheese, it wont get too hard, but if you want it to be harder, then gently squeeze the cheese inside the cheesecloth (or if you have a fine cheesecloth you can squeeze it hard). After a while of just letting it sit there and the whey soaking out of it you should have a soft cheese with large fat curds.

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* Pun.

** Ricotta—a soft cheese very much like the cheese you're making only it has very, very fine curds.

Try it!

ELECTRICITY

WARNING—ONLY USE DC (BATTERY) POWER. NEVER USE AC (HOUSE CURRENT) POWER!!!

To make some cool electrical experiments you will need these materials:

Insulated Wire
A switch of any variety
A screwdriver- Philips head and flat head
A battery (one or more) and a battery holder
Aligator clips (two or more)
Lightbulb and lightbulb holder
Screws and nails

The materials that follow are optional:

Wire stripper
Wire clipper
Needlenose pliers
A simple switched circuit

Take a battery holder (for one battery) and hook one of the wires on it to a lightbulb holder that has an eensy beensy lightbulb in it. Take a piece of insulated wire and strip the ends and hook it from the lightbulb holder to one connection of a tap switch. Take the other piece of wire from the battery holder and hook it to the other connection of the tap switch. Press down on the button of the tap switch and the lightbulb should light up. (If it doesn't check your connections, if they are tight then check your battery with a battery tester, if it is charged then check your lightbulb to be sure it's not broken) Now that you've got this running smoothly you're probably wondering why this is working (that is unless you already know). The battery gives off electricity and the electricity goes through the copper wire to the lightbulb. From the lightbulb it goes to one end of the switch And then it is stopped because it can't go any further. If you press the switch butten down the electricity goes back to the battery. This makes a complete circuit. If the circuit is broken the electricity can't flow through the lightbulb and so the lightbulb doesn't light up.

You can do basically any circuit as long as you use something that electricity will go through (electricity goes through copper, iron and steel) and as long as you have the electricity going out of the battery doing something of your choice and going back into the battery. For example, you can have: battery-wire-nail with wire coiled around it -wire-battery to make an electromagnit or battery-wire-switch-wire-nail with wire coiled around it-wire-battery to make a switched electromagnet or battery-wire-lightbulb-wire-back to battery to make a light that isn't switched.

Have fun with your electric materials and don't be afraid to find new circuits and try new things!

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101 Great Experiments by Neil Ardley
Experiments With Electricity
places for materials: Radio Shack

EYE

The eye is an amazing organ that can do jobs from as simple as telling light and dark, to telling brightness, color, shape, and size. There are many parts of the human eye including: the cornea, the pupil and iris, the lens and the retina. In this report the parts above will be described in the same order as above.

The eye is a sphere shaped structure about 1 inch diameter, on the average adult. It is held in its shape by a gel-like liquid called the vitreous humor. At the front of the eye replacing the vitreous humor is the aqueous humor, which is behind the cornea, a tough coating on the outside, and in front of the iris and pupil. In a nutshell, light passes through the pupil, is focused by the lens, and an image is produced on the retina.

The cornea is a thin, yet strong outer coating that light can pass through into the inner eye. Sometimes the cornea gets clouded, and has to be taken out, or the person could become blind. When this happens it is called a cataract.

The job of the iris is to determine the amount of light entering the eye. It does this by making the pupil (a hole in the iris) larger or smaller, to allow more or less light into the eye.

The lens of our eye is a amazing organ. It can focus light just as well a glass lens, and and is extremely flexible. This allows the lens to grow bigger or smaller if an object is nearer or farther. On the outside, the lens is suspended on a ligament, so you can move your eye without moving the lens. The ligament is attached to a ring of cilary muscles. When the cilary muscles contract, the tension on the ligament is relaxed and the lens bulges. When the cilary muscles are relaxed, the tension comes up on the ligament, and the lens is much flatter. When light passes through the pupil it goes to the lens. With a lens that is thicker in the middle (like the one in your eye) then all the light is directed towards the center. (This kind of lens is called a convex lens.) The light bent towards the center eventually crosses, and an upside down picture is cast on the retina.

The retina is a cup-shaped lining on the back of the eye. Light entering the eye gets focused by the lens, and casts a picture, upside down, back to front, on the retina. The retina detects this image, turns it into a series of coded messages, and sends them to the brain through the nerves. (When the brain gets the image it turns it right side up.) The retina has hundreds of special cells called rods and cones. Rods and cones each help us see in a different way. Rods help us see in the night, cones help us see colors.

The eye is a sensory organ, which means that it is the organ for one of our 5 senses; the sense of sight. It is made up of many parts including; rods and cones, the cornea, the iris, and the retina. The parts all work together to help us see and if one of the many parts is left out (except in special situations the cornea) you can't see properly.

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SNAIL

Snails are small slimy animals that live in shells (except for the slug). The snail's head has no eyes, but two antennas coming off of the head. Those are the eyes. When touched the snail pulls its antennas into its head and/or pulls its head into its shell, lying down very flat so that you cannot even see that it's there. If the shell of a snail with the snail in it was taken and turned upside down and the snail was felt with the fingertip it would feel very slimy and wet, even the land snail. If you have ever touched frog's eggs you will know what it feels like. Many snails have their anus located at the top of their head. If you think about it this really is necessary because a snail lives in a shell with only one opening. A snail moves by rippling the bottom, its foot, causing it to move.

This is not a very rapid form of locomotion. Many pond snails have both male and female organs.

Snails live in waters, both fresh and sea. Some, like the land-snail, live on land as opposed to water. Others, such as the slug, like rotten boards and logs. Snails love places that are moist.

Snail shells can easily be found at a lake or by the sea. They are small and like many shells curl to make a spiral. On some snails you can see darker lines that make a spiral of rings that show the growth of the snail. Usually great pond snail shells curve, when seen from the top, to the right, but ones that go to the left have been found. On the Nerite snail shell there are very black spots. Other snail shells are usually white or brownish. The river limpet is a snail, but surprisingly its shell is not coiled. The slug doesn't have a shell. It is the only snail without a shell. Although the exact same, it just doesn't have a shell.

A snail cannot walk out of its shell. Instead the shell grows. This happens by the snail adding more and more material, spiraling and spiraling round and round until it is big enough to fit him. The next time it cannot fit him he adds more. The shell itself is a kind of rocky material, but smoother than most rocks you might find in your garden. It feels sort of like a fingernail if you harden it up a bunch.

And here follows a group of writings by Free School kids of varied ages, taken from their newspaper for December, 1995:

Three stories by Ben Mittleman:

THE KID'S JOURNEY

Once upon a time there was one kid that went out into the woods without a grown-up. And suddenly it started raining and was pitch black and he cried for help for someone to bring a flashlight with him because he couldn't see his way back. So nobody heard him and a nice black bear heard him and showed him the way back because he could see in the dark.

When he got home he got into bed and went to sleep. And when he woke up in the morning, he went downstairs and got breakfast and then he went over to his friend's house and he played with him. They made a fort and got in it. After they got out, they went and brought stuff in.

THE BEAR WENT LOOKING FOR FOOD

A baby bear went out into the woods and got lost and couldn't find his way back. And his parents went out looking for him when they woke up. He found breakfast—he found mulberries. His parents came out into the woods and found him and he climbed down from the mulberry tree with all their food.

THE POSSUMS SAW A FOX

Once upon a time there was a grown-up possum who climbed up a tree and found her babies just born. And the baby possums woke up and climbed down the tree and their mother climbed down and they went looking for food. They found grapes and they ate them and went back home and they went to sleep. They woke up the next day and saw a fox who smelled them but couldn't smell where the smell was coming from.

THE CASE OF THE MISSING CAR

by Leon

The robbers came and took the car because they didn't have one. They stole food because they didn't have any. They eat only fish. If they ate anything else they died. They took the car for revenge. They blamed it on King Clinton, but he said he's innocent. It happened that his house was really chocolate, so they arrested him. Everybody got to boss him around. Everybody got to eat his house. All he got was a teensy piece of a rice cake and he had no house left. He got sick by their tiny speck of something. The people that ate the chocolate got it possessed into King Clinton. Everything on earth died. All he could do was sit there feeling bad. He had to find some way to get out of this. He's chained to the wall. He didn't have anything to drink but water. And he had nothing to do.

THE GHOSTED WOODS

by Bolade

One day there was a zebra. The zebra wanted to eat something. So he found a blue bug and a blue caterpillar. He ate them both. Then the zebra set out for a spring morning walk. When he climbed up the hills of the steep mountains, then he found his friends. His friends were so happy to see him that they started getting crazy. What they did was they asked if he wanted to get a pumpkin. He said, "Yes, I do. I'm hungry." So they ran off to get a pumpkin and his friends were so tired because they ran so fast, but he knew how to trot. Finally they said, "Finally, we're there!" They wanted to get the pumpkin but none of them wanted to do it so they had their friend do it. Then somebody heard a noise. It was so loud it sounded like someone was trotting through the woods following them. So when he got all the way where they were he said, "Hey guys!" but it wasn't one of them. It was a big teacher and it was theirs, too. They said, "Hi, Teach!" the teacher said, "Isn't there supposed to be another gang?" And they said, "Uh-huh huh?" Then the teacher said, "Where is it?" Then they said, "He's getting a pumpkin. We asked him if he wanted to get a pumpkin." And then when that happened, they heard another noise. It was like thump—thump. Then they heard—whoo! And it was a ghost.

T-REX DINOSAURS

by Austin

T-Rex was walking through the woods. He fought with a dinosaur. The dinosaur gave him a present. he opened it up. A lot of houses fell on top of him. The dinosaur began laughing. T-Rex tried to fight again and a baby dinosaur hide behind some bushes and picked up a big watermelon. He threw it on T-Rex. T-Rex was gonna put on his sport jacket. He flew up in space. Then the dinosaurs jumped up into space. They made T-Rex fall asleep. They put on their space mutant costumes. They made him get awake again. Then they chased T-Rex all around space. One of the dinosaurs hide behind some thing and they chased him to the door. Then he opened the door. The dinosaurs were still chasing him. He got out of the plane. He was right on the sky. Then he fell down with his feet up and then his feet fall down again. Then T-Rex chased the nice dinosaurs. Then a tiger chased the nice dinosaurs, too. They didn't move. They're real close to them. Then they jumped up and T-Rex and the tiger bonked into each other. Then they brought a bat. They were scared; they ran home.

ME AND MY FRIENDS (TRUE STORY)

by Tiffany Davis

Once upon a time there was me and Keenan. We made a fort and then it was like a secret club. Then we made plans. The plans were: not to get in trouble with our moms and dads. First rule was do not bother them when they're busy. Second rule is do not holler when they're on the phone, we might get hit by you know who. Third rule is to clean up your room when they tell you to and to not play "magic cars" or be sewing when they're not around. That's all the rules.

Jessie and Chris wrecked our fort. Then lots of people have been making lots of forts because there was stuff left from our fort. Then I was going to go to work with another fort, but I wanted to help these other people. But then, I didn't want any fort and this seemed so much better that I didn't have any responsibilities. I went up to lunch. They had a delicious lunch, and then I came back down and I didn't have to clean, because I had quit.

RECIPES:

ICE CREAM TREAT
by Keenan & Mashama

Take snow. Then put maple syrup in it. Then a banana on the front of the dish. The snow goes behind the banana. Then you put chocolate sauce on the whole thing.

FAVORITE RECIPE - CORN
by Mashama

Ingredients:

Water
Fire
Pepper
Salt
Corn

Instructions:

Put the corn into the pot full of water. Take the salt and pour a little bit inside. Take the pepper and pour a little bit of that inside. Keep it in the pot of water for 3 minutes. Then take it out with a fork or knife. And then you can eat it.

SMOOTHIE

by Jessalyn Ballerano

Ingredients:

2 Bananas
1/4 cup and 1/2 of juice (orange)
4 pieces of ice

Instructions:

Take the bananas, the juice and the ice and put the in the blender. Turn it on at the lowest speed for about three seconds. Then the next speed for about three seconds and then the next speed for about three seconds. Check on it at least once. Do that until you get to the highest speed. Then go right back down again but only for one second. Then take it out and pour it in a cup and you're done.

SCIENCE:

SQUIRREL MONKEY

by Hannah Mossop

Squirrel monkeys live in large groups of about one hundred. I've never heard of a Squirrel Monkey that's why I'm writing about it. They move swiftly seeking for food. They grow about one food and weight about two pounds. They use their long tails for balance when standing or leaping. Squirrel monkeys have very bright fur and in the picture they look so cute. Lots of squirrel monkeys live in the forests of Central and South America, from Costa Rica to Paraguay. Squirrel monkeys belong to the New World monkey family, Cebidae.

PENGUIN

by Sarah Mercogliano

Penguins have thick layers of fat that keep them warm in cold water. The largest penguin is about four feet high and weighs close to one hundred pounds. The seventeen other kinds vary in size. The smallest kind is only about one foot high.

MONKEY

by Sarah Mercogliano

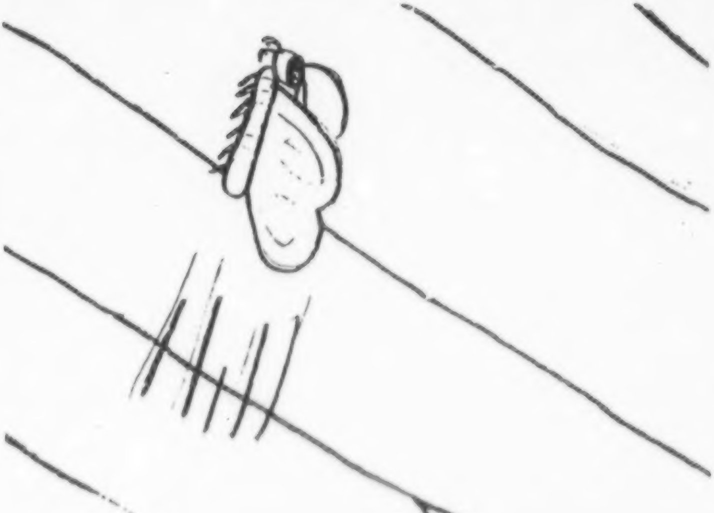
A monkey is a small lively, intelligent mammal. there are nearly two hundred kinds of monkeys. Most of which live in warm parts of the world. Monkeys have been my favorite animal since I was around four years old. Because they are cute and cuddly.

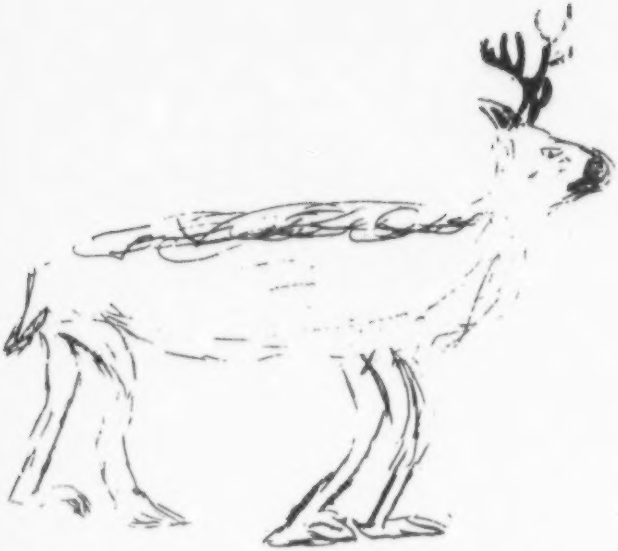
THE AFRICAN FOX

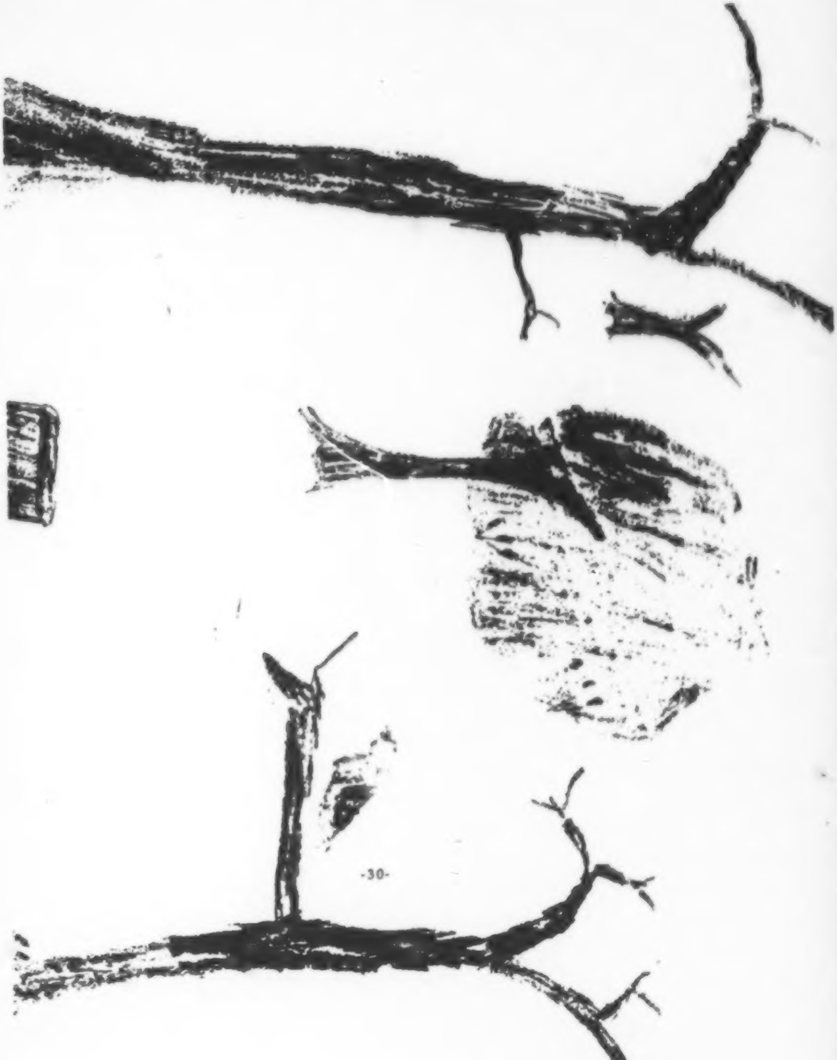
by Nicole Korzyk

The Fennec is called an African Fox. It is a cute little creature with huge ears. It lives in the desert of North Africa and Arabia. The Fennec sleeps in the day time and is awake at night.

Note: Nicole made a picture of the Fennec, but unfortunately, I didn't get it. But I do have a few pictures sent by Ted Strunck's kids at Upland Hills School in Michigan. I wish I could print more, but 1) some of them were too faint for Applescan to pick up, 2) some of them were on lined paper, and that doesn't scan well, and 3) my RAM memory is right on the edge, and so the program refused to copy some of the big ones! Sorry, kids. I really like your nature studies! Send me some more, and send me some stories or poems too.







-30-

On the following pages are some more poems written by members of the group that call themselves Kalepaedeia House. I call them the Kale kids. Thanks again for your beautiful poems, people! Do keep sending us your writings.

Six by Lauren Cahoon, 12

The Young Unicorn

The young unicorn yearns for
the smooth, silent mountains
full of peace.
She bows her horn to the ground,
weeping silver tears,
keeping sadness for many years.
She spreads her wings,
gladly sings,
and flings
herself toward home.
White hoofs beat the earth,
full of mirth--
the lone one has come
home.

The Life of a May Fly

I hatch, awake, in the late morning sun.
My kin and others dance and greet me
with a glance of welcome.
I flit and buzz my lazy wings.
I am new, and I do not wish to doze.
Lying in the bit of beautiful sun
on the bare granite boulder
in the cold mountain stream,
I soon join the rest in a frenzy of flirtatious flight, above the free-flowing fountain
of the cold mountain stream.
When the frenzy has ceased,
determined to do my duty
in the simple cycle of life,
I lay my eggs in the
clear cold Colorado creek.
Creeping, crawling, I slowly
scramble to the bare granite boulder
in the cold mountain stream.
I lie in the light—
I'm not feeling strong.
Here comes night,
for the shadows are getting long.
I close my wings,
for now I must die,
and it feels as if
life has just whizzed by.

Western Twilight

The slanted sun gilds the hilled plain.

White and purple flowers clump together,
savoring the luscious light.
Scented petals shall close
when night's breathing darkness moves in.

Western sunset, an inferno red, fiery orange
to yellow, green to blue-lavender,
to periwinkle and indigo.
It washes the sky, bathes the few cirrus
clouds an indescribable lilac-pink.

My memories paint this magestic,
breath-taking moment,
suspending it in time.

The elegant Miss Eglatine is an elephant.
She eagerly entertains the eagle,
with hopes of an encore.
But the fact is,
her balancing act is
not
intact.

The hasty hare hurriedly hops.
The fickle fox foolishly follows.
He makes a snatch,
and what
he happens to catch
is thorns from the briar patch.

Moonbeams

Moonbeams descend
from above on
silver slippers,
Sweetly whispering in
quiet, shadowy voices—
Calling to you to come out
and walk among them.

One by Timmy Maragni, 13

The Dangerous Buzzing Fuzz

Bees buzz in the fuzzy fuzz,
Boring me with their boring buzz.
At last I can stand no more!
Little do I know what's in store.
I rush toward the buzzy fuzz,
Soon regreting ever trying to stop the buzz.

Three by Rebecca Furbush-Bayer, 12

Slippers

In early morning when we sleep
our slippers under our beds do creep,
and shyly in low voices talk
while they sit and while they walk.
But when they hear us give a yawn,
they know it must be after dawn,
so they run out upon the floor
into the exact same spot as before.

And this we never get to see,
for they do it as quickly as can be!

The Island

Incredible oasis in the deep—
See! See! There it is! To it we must creep,
Laboring in our boat we sail.
And finally reaching it to complete our tale:
Nothing but one palm tree
Dusk closes in on you and me.

The Groveling Gray Goose

The groveling gray goose
tries to trample the tri-colored
Trumpet vine.
Then, she wafts her
wonderful white wings
and wanders to the west.

One by Isaac Furbush-Bayer, 15

Cows* Come From the Frozen North

Cows come from the frozen north
knowing snow is crowding across
the open fields.
Finding food is forbidden
in frozen fields.
But bulls butt beyond
basic ability,
blindly rutting for
females' flippant calves.

**Note: These cows are the Inuit feed source of caribou*

Mosaic—A Literary Magazine:

We are (also) honored to have the opportunity to publish excerpts from the new magazine Mosaic *published in March by the Free School's oldest students, ages ten to thirteen. This new publication was put together by a great group of young people whose initiative and talent in launching this venture simply follows on the heels of several years of independent study and apprenticeship. Among other things, they have learned to make good use of whatever expertise is available in the community around them, including the expert assistance of two computer consultants, one of whom showed them how to put the front cover together and the other helped them to print it in several glowing colors (expertise donated!).*

Its birth was accompanied by a front page spread (2nd section) in the local newspaper and a reception in our best local bookstore. I can't reproduce the beautiful front cover here, alas, but here's the dedication, a snapshot of the crew and the text from the back cover—and most of the writing from inside. Guess you'll have to order a copy from the kids if you want to see the whole thing, though. It costs $5, (including $1.50 for shipping and handling), and you can order it from Zach Korzyk, c/o The Free School, 8 Elm St., Albany, NY 12202.

DEDICATION

This first issue of *Mosaic* is dedicated to the loving memory of Michael T. Ketzer 1980 - 1995. Mike was a good friend and classmate last year, who died in a tragic hunting accident. We will always miss you, Mike.

BACK COVER

Editorial staff: front: Jessica, Lily, Jesse, Zach; back: Ted, Elinor, Elisha

The Free School is a place where we are free *from* the tight scheduling, the grading and labeling, and the pressure to learn found in conventional schools. And the Free School is a place where we are free *to* learn at our own pace, because we want to and not because we have to, and where we are free to be ourselves. Here we come to school because it's fun.

The Free School is for kids ages 3-14. It has an apprenticeship program for the older students where we get to do things that we wouldn't normally get to do like advanced computer programming and rebuilding, horse training, and anthropology. We also go on big trips to places like Puerto Rico, Washington State and Canada which we raise the money for ourselves.

MY UNCLE JOHNNIE

by Jesse Hyler

This is a story about a man who touched a lot of lives. John J. TenEyck, also known as "Cherokee," was my uncle. He loved children: he had seven kids, twelve grandchildren, many nieces and nephews and several great-nieces and great-nephews. He got the name Cherokee because he was an Indian and that was his handle on the CB when he was a truck driver.

Every summer I went down to my aunt and uncle's house to work with my uncle on his truck because it was a lot of fun and I did a lot of fun things with him. First he taught me how to drive a car and when I was eleven, he taught me how to drive an 18-wheeler truck. I remember me and him mowing the grass every week, but now that fun with my uncle is over because my uncle died December 30, 1995, at the age of 50 at his home in Marlboro, N.Y.

Ever since he died I have been hearing stories about him that I would like to share with you. My uncle drank once in a while and when he got drunk he was the funniest man alive. The stories I am about to share are from before I was born.

One night my uncle and his brother were in a garage. They were drunk and they were working on a stock car. It didn't run, but they got it running, and then my uncle got behind the wheel and his brother opened the garage door. My uncle went shooting out the garage. When my uncle was flying up 9W going 200 miles an hour, he passed the cops and they said it could be only one person—John TenEyck. They started going after him and my uncle couldn't slow down because the car had no brakes because it was one of those long stockcars that slows down by a parachute that opens when you press a button. Uncle Johnnie pulled into this diner. but the car was too long to turn around. So he got out of the car and picked up the front end to turn it around, but the cops got him and brought him home and that was the end of that story.

My uncle was a very big man and one night about 20 years ago, my uncle and his brother's family were very hungry and had nothing to eat. So he and his brother went to the bar to think it over. They got drunk and my uncle told his brother he knew this place where they could get a bull. They went to the guy's house at night time. The guy who owned the bull kept it on his front lawn, so my uncle and his brother went up to the bull, took it by its horns and threw it on top of the car. You have to be strong to do something like that. They brought it home, threw it down the stairs and killed it. The next morning they were eating hamburgers and sausage.

While my uncle and his brother were sitting in front of the house eating, the cops came up to them and told my uncle that there was a bull missing. And there were my uncle and his brother sitting right in front of the cops eating hamburgers from the bull! The cops said that they knew he had the bull somewhere in that house, but my uncle said, "No, I don't." So the cops said, "John, I know we have no way to prove it, but we know you have that bull around here somewhere." My uncle said again, "No, I don't!" and so the cops left and my uncle and his brother kept on eating and that was the end of that.

Thank you for listening to my stories. My Uncle Johnnie would be pleased.

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WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT GOING TO ANOTHER PLANET?

by Jessica E. Graves

Kathy and Anna were walking home from a movie on a hot St. Louis summer day.

"That was great!" said Anna. Anna was 11 and tall for her age. She had blonde hair and green eyes. Kathy was 12 and was tall for her age, too. She had blue eyes and brown hair.

"Yeah," said Kathy. "Good thing Mom took David to the store." David was Kathy's 4-year-old brother and in Kathy's eyes he always ruined everything.

" I'm just lucky Mom took Daniel to a Baby Museum," said Anna. Daniel was Anna's 3-year-old brother and was always getting in Anna's stuff.

The next day Anna woke up late and went down to breakfast.

"Mom," she said, "Me and Kathy were going to go to the Arch and play in the park today. Could you give us a ride?"

"I've got things to do," said Anna's mom. "Well, I guess I could give you a ride, but I can't pick you up."

"Kathy's mom will," said Anna.

"Okay then," said Anna's mom. "You may go if you bring Danny."

"Noooo," whined Anna.

"Yeeess," mocked her mom.

So as you can imagine, the girls got stuck with their little brothers.

"Okay," said Kathy once they got there. "Lisa says you guys have to listen to me and Anna."

"Who Lisa?" asked David.

"My Mommy!" said Daniel.

"Anyway," said Kathy, "Got it?"

"Okay!" said the boys.

"All right, boys, come with us," said Anna.

"Okey dokey!" the boys said.

"I wanna go in the Arch!" yelled David.

"We will later," said Anna.

"No, now," yelled David even louder.

"Oh brother," muttered Kathy.

"All right," said Anna glumly.

"Yippee!!" cried the boys.

When they got to the top of the Arch, they could see all of downtown St. Louis.

"This is great," said Kathy, "Hey Anna, I bet you didn't know that the Arch is 630 ft. tall and was built in 1935."

"Wow, cool." said Anna.

"No," said Daniel. "I wanna go back down."

"Look kid," said Anna angrily, "you wanted to come up, and now we're going to stay for a while. Look, you can see the old courthouse, Bush Stadium, the Mississippi, everything!"

While the girls gazed out the windows, the boys played tag. Bang!! Anna fell to the floor. She lay there for a second or two, then, "Daniel!!" she yelled. "You brat! I'll get you for this!!"

"Wait," said Kathy calmly. "David and Daniel aren't here."

"What?" asked Anna now sounding more panicked than angry.

"Anna," said Kathy.

"Yeah," replied Anna. "I don't feel so good."

"Wait," said Anna, trying to sound brave. "They must be hiding!"

"David, Danny," called Kathy, starting to look for the boys.

"Man," said Anna, "they've got to be here!"

"No, they don't." said a strange voice. The girls spun around. There stood a man who looked like a man from long ago. He had a white shirt with black pants and a hat of ugly green. "My name is Q. I am an all powerful being!"

"So what!" said Anna meanly. "We've got to find our brothers, so leave us alone, freak!"

"Oh, must we be so mean?" he said, acting sad, but smiling.

Before Anna could say another word, Kathy elbowed her in the side, not too hard, but enough to make her shut up. Then Kathy spoke, "Did you see where our brothers ran of to?"

"Hmmmmm," Q said mockingly. "Do I know . . . well yes I do."

"Where?"

"Patience, let's not rush," Q said testily.

"Q, we have to rush!" Kathy was now yelling.

"You know, you remind me of Captain Jean-Luc Picard," Q said. "But, if you insist."

The next thing they knew, they weren't in the Arch or in St. Louis! They were in another world! The houses were made of pure crystal!! The kids gazed around—it was beautiful! After a while, Q said, "Well, it seems you like my home planet. You should get used to it, you'll be staying a while."

"What?" yelled Anna.

"I do believe you heard me, but if you didn't, I said, 'you'll be staying for a while.'" Then Q took them to a cell where they were to stay.

"We've got to get out of here," said Kathy, pacing the floor. He's got David and Danny, I know it!"

"Good observation," said a voice. The girls spun around to find a little animal. It had floppy ears, a round nose; his body was covered with purple fur, and it had two black beady eyes. For a moment, they all stared. "My name is Binky," the creature said.

"Pleased to meet you. My name is Kathy," said Kathy in a shaky voice. "And this is my friend, Anna." The girls reached out their hands. Binky shook them.

"Well, now that we're acquainted," said Binky, "let's see. . . hmmm. . .yes, you're the two from Saint Louis, Missouri!"

"Yeah," said Anna. "We're looking for our brothers."

"To my understanding, you hate your brother. Is it true?" asked Binky.

"Well. . ." said Kathy, sounding uneasy. "No. . . well. . .yes. . . no. . . well."

"Well, do you?" asked Binky.

"No, they get on our nerves and we say we do, but not really."

"That's great!!" cried Binky happily. "It is?" said Anna.

"Of course it is," answered Binky.

"Why?" asked Kathy.

"Well, let me explain," Binky said. "If you like your brothers, you'll be able to save 'em!"

"What?" said Anna, almost yelling.

"Well, every year Q picks somebody from Earth and brings him or her to this place. He is evil and has been wanted for years!" said Binky. "Only the Inks haven't gotten him yet."

"Binky?" said Kathy.

"Yes?"

"What are Inks?"

"Oh, I'm sorry! The Inks are like police. Anyway, Q has this contest here. You have to see if you can do all the obstacles and get to your brothers within a week."

"A week!" cried the girls.

"Now I know it sounds heard but . . ."

"That's easy!" interrupted Kathy.

"Wanna bet!" said Binky.

The next day, Kathy, Anna, and Binky arrived at the place where they were to compete. It looked like a mile long with obstacles like mountains, deserts, and rocks. The girls stared. It was too much. How would they ever get across?

"Well," said Binky triumphantly, "does that look easy?"

"No," said Anna slowly.

Just then Q came over and said, "Well you know the rules, but if you don't, here they are." He handed the list to the three of them. It listed very fair rules. "Follow me," said Q, "and I'll show you your brothers."

The girls were silent. "Unless you don't want to see them," Q said in his testing voice.

"We wanna see 'em," said Kathy, while Anna stood there silently fuming.

"What about you, Miss?" Q asked Anna.

Anna said nothing at first, but then, "Yeah, you butthead!!"

"Okay then," said Q. "Would you like Binky to come?"

"Yeah, Butthead!!" answered Anna.

"Then let's go," said Q. When they arrived at the cell where the boys were kept, it was light. They had a bunk bed and food like pizza and tacos. It was definitely 100 percent better than the girls' cell.

"Why this cell. . ." Kathy's voice trailed off. She stopped. The boys had Nintendo! Sega! Big screen t.v.! They were fast asleep on the floor of the cell, or should I say palace.

"Well, they're pooped," said Q quietly.

"Q!" cried David happily once he woke up.

"I've got somebody here to see you!" said Q.

"Who?" asked Daniel who had just woken up.

"Us," said Anna who was still furious with Q. The boys looked behind Q.

"Kathy!" cried David as he rushed to hug his sister.

"Anna!" cried Danny as he almost knocked Q down trying to get to his sister. After a while, the boys gave the girls a tour of the cell.

"And this is the Sega and Nintendo," said Danny. "But we never use them. We just drive the trucks." He pointed to the kind of trucks you get in and drive for little kids. When the tour ended, Q said that the girls had to go. The boys made a big fit, but Q said that they would see them soon. So the boys said they wanted to be tucked in to go to sleep. The girls did and then left.

A week went by and the girls visited every other day. Finally the day of the competition came. Kathy and Anna got into position. The girls had Walkie Talkies to communicate. They had five more minutes, so Anna said to Kathy, "Let's read over the rules again."

"Okay," was the answer she got. So they pulled out the rules once again. The rules were long, but fair. Here's what they said:

When gun is shot, must go.
Must stay between boundaries.

Must finish within one week.

Must get to brother before Max does.

If Max makes it before you, he eats you and your brother.

If you run out of water, there are pure springs along the way.

If you tie Max, there will be a Bonus round (will be explained if it happens).

Kathy read the rest of the rules. Then "TIME OUT!!" yelled Kathy. "Who the hell is Max?"

Q nodded over to the right of Anna. There stood an 8 ft. monster. It was slimy with a yellow tongue and the worst breath. It had big feet, a green head, a brown body, and huge teeth. "STOP!" yelled Q "You two have to separate."

"No way, JERK!" replied Anna.

"Yes way, big mouth!" retorted Q.

"Drop dead, sleezeball!" was Anna's comeback.

"Look people," said Binky, breaking in, "let's do this, the girls go to the halfway point separately. Then we'll pick up the boundary between you two and you go the rest of the way together."

"Okay with us. How 'bout you, blubber boy?" said Anna.

Q was about to reply to that when, all of a sudden, there was a gunshot. Kathy took off, jumped over the swamp, over the rocks, got a grass stain on her jeans, jumped over the alligators and swung over the snakes. When she reached the valley, she phoned Anna.

"Anna, come in."

"Here," said Anna. "I'm in Valley #2."

"I'm in Valley #1," said Kathy.

"Okay, Kathy, tell me when you reach Death Mountain."

"Death Mountain!" cried Kathy.

"Anna out."

"I'll never make it!" Kathy sighed.

"It's ten o'clock at night, Anna. What are you still doing up?" asked Kathy sleepily.

"It's Q, he's a bas..." Anna started to say.

"Look on the bright side, Anna," interrupted Kathy, "we're only three obstacles away from the end. Now let's get some sleep."

The next day Kathy and Anna started out again. Anna ran, jumped over, dived under, and climbed up to Daniel.

"Yes!" she yelled, but where was Kathy?

"Kathy, Kathy come in!" Anna said into her Walkie Talkie. Then she saw her lying on the ground a little ways from her brother. Then she saw Max.

"One, two, three!" Anna jumped back to the playing field. She ran, dodging and jumping. It was a lot, but Anna went to Kathy, lifted her up on her back and carried her across the finish line. Then Anna woke Kathy up.

"Did we win?" asked Kathy.

"Yep. But you were out of it for a while and you got me a little worried."

"I LOST!" cried Max. The girls turned. Max was lying on the ground a few feet from the boys throwing a tantrum. Kathy grabbed David up and twirled him around in the air. Anna did the same thing. "My congrats to both of you," said Binky through his Walkie Talkie.

"Thanks, Bink," answered the girls. "We won!" they kept yelling over and over.

Then they saw Q walking toward them reluctantly.

"Here," he said, handing them each a gold medal. "You won."

"Bend down!" said David. "We wanna see."

Later the next day, Binky said, "Here is a token of my appreciation." He handed them each a hamster. Just then Q came in. "You cheated," he yelled.

"How?" said Anna mockingly.

"Anna helped Kathy!"

"That was the point," shot back Anna. "Besides, it didn't say not to in the rules." She had taken out the rules and was checking them over.

"That's correct," said Binky.

"Give me that," said Q, snatching them out of Anna's grip.

Q frowned at the list. Then Binky whispered something in Q's ear. "All right then. I'll give you each a wish, but it was Binky's idea."

"But why would you give us a wish?" asked Anna, sounding suspicious.

"It is simple, one of you has got to wish to go home. Then I will be rid of you," Q told the girls.

"Okay then, I want to go home!" said Kathy. Next thing the girls knew, they were standing outside of the Arch.

"Come on, I've been waiting ten minutes," said Kathy's mom, who was standing by the car. The boys ran ahead.

"Guess what!" said David. "We were kidnapped by Q and . . ."

"Tell me in the car, okay?" said Kathy's mom. "Where did he get this? And Kathy?"

"Yes?"

"Where in the world did you get hamsters?" The girls silently exchanged smiles. "Oh well, at least they came with cages."

When the girls were walking to the car, Anna said "I wish we could do that again!"

"It will be granted," said Q, and then vanished.

One year later . . .

Kathy blew out the candles on her cake. She was 13 and it felt great.

She had gotten tickets to a Cardinals game, a cell phone, catcher's gear, a hat, and a lot of baseball cards. It had been a year since Kathy, Anna, David and Danny had seen Q. Both moms thought it was just a made up story.

Anna was still wondering about Q. Before he disappeared for the last time, he said, "It will be granted" after Anna had wished to do it all again.

"Hey Kathy," Anna said, handing Kathy her new hat, "let's take the boys to the Arch."

Kathy looked up, Anna winked. Kathy knew that Anna wanted to test Q to see if he kept his word. "Mom," Kathy said, "can you drop us off at the Arch today?"

"Why, so you can bring back another hamster?"

"No," Kathy said, "I just want to go and spend the day with Danny, David, and Anna down at the Arch."

"Well, I guess if you bring the boys it would be all right."

When they got to the Arch, Kathy said, "Okay boys, let's go up to the top of the Arch and see if Q comes."

"Who's Q?" asked David.

"You must not remember, Q's the n-n-nice man who let you use his big trucks," Kathy forced out.

"Oh yeah!" David exclaimed, "I 'member now! He was really great, but I wanted to play on the playground like you two." By that he meant the obstacle course the girls took to get the boys.

"David," Anna said,"that was no picnic."

"Well, of course not!" David said, very frustrated, "it was a playground!"

"Now boys," Anna said, "You look out the windows while me and Kathy talk."

"It's Kathy an' I," corrected Danny. Danny was on this grammar thing, where if you say something incorrect he would correct you.

"Fine," Anna sighed. This time it was the boys who were gazing out the windows and the girls who weren't really noticing. They were too busy deciding who to take to the ballgame. "Well, Kathy, you've got two weeks to decide who to take."

"Yeah," Kathy agreed, "but I know that you're coming, so I've got six more tickets left."

"Look at that!" yelled Danny. "It's a big ol' storm!"

"Quiet down, Danny; we're not the only people here," Kathy scolded.

"But look, Kathy," Danny protested, "it's so awesome!"

"Yeah," David chimed in," it's a twister!"

"Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhh!!!!!!!!" everyone but the four of them yelled and started running to the elevators. "Now look what you've done, David, you scared everyone off!" Anna yelled. "But that *is* cool!" It was a rainbow colored spiral. Then they saw something come out of it and then disappear.

"Wow, this is amazing!" Kathy said. "But I wonder what came out of it." "Why, that was my ship of course." The four of them turned around to see who said that. I mean after all they thought everyone had left. It was Q, standing there watching the spiral.

"Hello Q, have you been well?" Danny asked in his most grown up voice. "Why, yes I have. Fish egg?" Q answered now with a plate of fish eggs in hand. Daniel made a face, "Grooossss!"

"Would you all hurry up and get in the ship so we can go?" Q asked. "What ship?"

"That ship." Q waved his hand and there appeared a mini pirate ship. "Absolutely wonderful. Come along chaps," Danny said, again in his grown up voice, as he walked to the ship.

"Coming *chap*," the girls said as they walked to the ship after Danny. "Coming little buddy?" Q asked David.

"Be there in a sec."

"All right, but we won't wait too long." Q turned to go but before he got two feet,"Ouf!" Q fell to the floor. David had pounced on him from the bench. "Get off Davey!" Q said.

"No!"

"Why not?"

"'Cause."

"'Cause why?"

"'Cause you are wearing a Yankees T-shirt," David said with disgust. "Sorry." Q quickly snapped his fingers and his T-shirt was transformed into a Cardinals one. "There, good enough?"

David tapped his head. Q sighed, then he snapped his fingers and his hat quickly had a Cardinals symbol on it.

"Q," Kathy said as he got to his feet, "you've got to learn."

"I know," Q answered as they started on their way, "but I came not to talk about me, but to grant Anna's wish. Also I have someone for you to meet. Her name is Lisa Sugarman. I've told her about you, and I just know you'll love her."

"Hey, guys. You're finally here. I've been waiting here for thirty minutes. Q said ten minutes max," said a dark haired woman standing there.

"Who's that?" asked David.

"Oh, that's Lisa Sugarman," said Q. Then, turning to Anna he said, "Now Anna, you've got a choice to make. You can go on the same trail, People Island, or Bunland Island. So which will it be?"

"Well, "Anna thought for a moment, "People Island sounds the most interesting."

"All right then, here's the map. Now, it's getting late so I'll show you to your room and tomorrow we'll talk."

Automatically Lisa, Anna, David, Danny, and Kathy were in a big room with a door on either side. One side was for Lisa and the girls, and the other side was for the boys. "Whoa!" Anna exclaimed. "This is so much better than the last time we were here."

"Totally," agreed Kathy.

"So," said Lisa, "guess we should get to know each other."

"Guess so," Danny agreed.

"How about me and the girls make dinner while you boys get settled in and we can talk while we eat, "Lisa suggested.

"It's the girls and I," corrected Danny, "and you bet your booty that will work."

"Danny," Kathy told him, "be polite. Now apologize to Lisa."

"Sorry Lisa," Danny said bashfully.

"Oh, that's okay. I don't really mind." Lisa replied.

"Well," Lisa said, "I feel better knowing you all now."

"Lisa, did you first come here against your will?" Kathy said.

"No, why?"

"'Cause we did. So, how *did* you get here?"

"My first trip was the last time I was here. I came here because I needed a break from work. My boyfriend, Tim, knew Q as a kid and he told me about him, so I ended up here," explained Lisa. The four kids listened as she told them what first happened when she came. When she was done talking they watched T.V. and then went to sleep.

"Rise an' shine sleepy heads!!" yelled the boys.

"Mmmmmm," Anna moaned.

"Go away!" Kathy said sleepily.

"Who needs an alarm clock when we have the boys?" Lisa asked, getting up.

"I do," Kathy said, "to bonk 'em over the head with!"

"Greetings favored ones!" Q proclaimed. "Your arrival has been awaited."

"What the hell did he say?" Anna whispered to Lisa.

"What he usually says, nothing at all," answered Lisa.

"Since Anna has chosen to go on People Island, she is the one in charge," Q announced to them. "At lunch I will give her the map and show her all the supplies; also the four of you will have to decide if you want to go by the boat or just start on the Island."

"Let's go by boat, guys!" Danny said.

"That would take more time and would be harder," Lisa warned him. "You would have to help out. No just making us do all the work."

"I promise, I promise!" he shouted.

"Well," Anna said to everyone, "I want to go by boat and it appears that everyone else does, too, but if we do go by boat everyone helps out. Agreed?"

"Agreed," everyone chimed in.

"It's decided then," Q said, "You go by boat. Anna, here's the supply list. Now, let's go eat!"

"Q, are you saying that in three weeks we have to find the treasure, then get back on the boat, and sail two days to get back?" Anna said as she leaned back in her chair.

"Yes," Q said, "that's exactly what I'm saying. Except you forgot the two days to get there. So it's a total of three weeks and four days."

"Q, that's enough time," Lisa said. "I mean that's enough time for me and the girls. If it were just us, sure, we could do it."

"It's the girls and I," Danny interrupted.

"That's wonderful, Danny," Lisa said with no enthusiasm. Then she got back to arguing with Q. "As I was saying, we girls could do it but the boys are under seven-years-old; they get tired much more easily."

"No!" Q said defensively. "The boys are perfectly capable."

"You're not listening to me, "Lisa said, almost yelling. "The boys are younger; we need at *least* a month."

"No!" Q said again, "The boys can do it. Can't you guy—?" As he turned to face them, he saw that they were sound asleep in their chairs. "Oh fine. You have one month, no more."

"Wait!" Kathy said. "Aren't we all forgetting something?" She paused. "Anna's mom will be waiting in the lobby at five o'clock sharp."

"On the contrary my dear, "Q said. "Do you remember the last time you were here?"

"Oh yeah, duuh!" Kathy said, bopping her head with her hand (not too hard). "So Q, when do we start?"

"Why tomorrow of course."

"So this is the ship?" asked Lisa.

"Yep." Q said, beaming.

"Nice touch, 'Fish Eggs'," she read the name of the ship sarcasticaly, "where the hell do you get this crap."

"Bon Voyage!" Q waved to the ship as the ship set sail for People Island.

"You too!" David yelled.

"All right, boys, if you're on this ship you've got to help." Anna started to give orders, "Danny, you be the lookout until one o'clock. It's twelve o'clock now so you've got one hour to do it. David, you get the vegetables clean for dinner now, and then you will take over for Danny at one o'clock. Lisa, you drive 'til two o'clock; Kathy you start to cook dinner. I'll check on you all as the day goes by. Ready, GO!"

"Good, Kathy you're doing a real good job. Anna wanted me to take over 'cause she wanted to drive." Lisa smiled and climbed down from the lookout post. "Okay everyone, five minutes until dinner. Danny and David go set the table."

"I hate setting the table," David complained as they walked toward the kitchen.

"Yeah," Danny agreed.

All of a sudden the ship tipped to the side.

"Eeeeeeeeeeeek!" Kathy screeched. "It's........it's..........it's TARMOIL!!"

To be continued..........

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Held Back
by Ted Becker

I walk along the streets everyone looking down
they might have something to say but
they are just too held back
you will never tell what you really think
scream out in rage and push out
of the imaginary
cage.

MAY'S FLATULATING

by Elinor Mossop

I wrote this story for English class. We had to put all our spelling words into a story. These are our spelling words :

haggard
flatulate
chaos
deceive
benevolent
camouflage
plummet
inadequate
pandemonium
generous
permission

We thought that flatulate meant fart but later we found out that there wasn't such a word.

Long ago there was a haggard old lady, May, who loved to flatulate. She liked to flatulate at the office where she worked, because everything went chaos.

May was getting tired of flatulating at work because everyone was used to it. That day when she was walking home she found a flier on the street, it said :

AUDITION
TRY OUT FOR COURT FLATULATER
AGE 50 - 100
5.00 PM Wednesday 17th Feb.
COURT OF KING ETALUTALF

May thought she would try out for court Flatulater but she would need to deceive King Etalutalf because she was 102 years old. May had heard that the King was quite benevolent but she thought she better not take any chances.

The next day May went to the beauty salon and asked the lady at the desk, " can you make me look like a 52 year old lady ".

" Yes, but that will cost you 20 dollars ", the lady replied.

" That's OK with me ", May answered.

It took 2 hours for May to look like a 52 year old. May went home and quickly phoned the castle to ask permission to go to the castle. The King gave permission for May to go to the audition but he said she would have to camouflage herself to blend in with the environment around the because they were having a war. The King said May could sneak in a back door which the enemy didn't know about. May camouflaged herself as a bush, but she didn't hide herself well enough, because as soon as she got there the enemy captured her. The Chief was trying to decide whether to be generous and let her go or let her plummet into the crocodile lake, because everyone thought May was inadequate to eat. Just then May flatulated louder then she had ever in her life. The enemies army broke out into pandemonium and May ran into the castle. King Etalutalf had been watching from the castle watch tower and immediately gave May the job.

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TIME

by Jessica Graves

Time is knocking at my door,
And now it's walking on my floor,
I don't want to go today,
I wish time would just go away,
It's not time for me to die,
For I'm just a poor little old fly.

When I was ten years old I went on a trip to the Auschwitz concentration camp with my parents and sister. We went to remember the people who died there. There was also a convocation to start off a peace walk from Auschwitz to Hiroshima, led by Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist monks and nuns. I wrote this poem while I was in Auschwitz and read it on the last day of the convocation.

THE SOUL OF THE HOLOCAUST

by Ted Becker, age 10

I am dead, but still alive.
I can speak, but you can't hear.
I can't be trapped, but I can die.
You can see me, but you can't touch me.
I am living inside of you. If you go, I go too.
If you can tell them, I can live.
If you don't I will die inside of you.
Please remember. Please tell them.

LISHA'S BIRTH REPORTS

by Elisha Mittleman

I have been at the Free School for thirteen years, and this is my last year here before I go to Albany High School. I have been working with my mentor, who is a natural childbirth teacher, for three years and I have been to at least five or six births. These are three of the stories that I have written about the births I attended.

Sarah's Birth

When we got to Sarah's house, she was in the guest room, mostly on her side. We put hot and cold compresses on her lower back and perineum. At this birth, I got to help more. I helped with the hot and cold compresses and later on in her labor, during her contractions, I held one of her legs up in the air. When Jasmine's head came out, it was all purple. When the rest of her body came out, she did not turn so that one shoulder came before the other—her body was white but her head was still purple, but she was still breathing. I think one of the most important things that happened after the birth was when Dan got to hold Jasmine while Sarah was taking a shower. It was their first bonding time.

Karen's Birth

I got there at 9:00 PM. Karen was walking around and went outside with Dorian. She had a lot of back labor, so someone had to rub her back during each contraction. I think Maxine's head was turned a little, so it took longer for her to be born (36 hours). She had strong labor for a long time. I fell asleep and in the morning she was still pregnant and her labor was still strong, so Betsy thought it would be good if we went to the Center. When we got there, Karen got in the tub. About two or three hours later, Maxine was born in the tub. Dorian was in the tub with her and Helena and Betsy had to push on Karen's hip bones and sit bones to help Max come out. I also remember that Karen had been in labor so long that she didn't have the strength to push herself up to the front of the tub when she had a contraction. So Betsy had to push her to the front so that she would have enough room to catch the baby. It was a long birth but it was good.

Heidi's Birth

When we first got there, it seemed like it was going to be a long time before he was born. It didn't feel that tense. We were there for a little while, it seemed, but then he kind of just popped out. It was neat when I felt his head when Heidi was pushing. It felt really big and then it was just gone. Maybe because of the position she was in—she was on her elbows and knees—he would just go back inside. That position let Heidi stretch out so that he could fit through and she would not tear. He weighed nine and a half pounds. We didn't do much, we just did hot compresses. I think we listened to the baby one time. Heidi pretty much did it herself. He's so cute.

Most people say that having kids at a birth might stop the labor, but I think it helped Heidi because she wanted Kayleigh, her two year old, there. Brent's mother and father were there, too, and Heidi's parents came in right after the baby was born. They are a really close family and they wanted to be there for Heidi and Brent and Heidi wanted to share this special feeling with them.

Well these are the stories I wrote after some of the births that I have attended. They were all exciting and I learned a lot from every one of them. I hope to be at many more births, and some day I hope to catch a baby.

THE CHIP
by Ted Becker

Beep! Beep! The cellular phone rang in that annoying high-pitched shriek. I took the covers off my head and rolled over to see a woman about 5' 11" tall lying next to me. Damn! I wish I could remember what happened last night!

I picked up the phone only to hear my partner, Cansy, screaming in my ear, "Damn it, Dexter, you were supposed to be here half an hour ago." "OK, OK, I'll be down in a minute." I hung up, got my black pants on, black tee shirt, and black shoes for the occasion of delivering our newest microchip to Cadillac Corporation, the biggest computer manufacturer in America. I put my revolver in my coat pocket even though I wasn't expecting much trouble. Then I wrote a note telling the woman in my bed, "Gone to get groceries. Be back soon."

I opened the door and stepped out after throwing a few pieces of clothing in the laundry bag. Wow, the air was cold compared to inside my sweaty hotel room. I walked down the hallway, stopped, and pressed the down button on the elevator. To my surprise it opened right away. I stepped in. It was even colder in the elevator. The elevator started moving down 29, 28, 27, 26, 25, 23, 22, 21, 20, 19, 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13—it stopped. A tall man stepped in. He said, "So how is your stay? Mine is horrible." I was startled. I had never seen him before. I was about to say something when the elevator reached on the first floor. I stepped out quickly and ran out the door of the building. Then I stopped and jumped on my motorcycle and sped off. I turned onto Seance Rd. for about a mile, then left onto Johnson Ave. and stopped at Lenox Hardware. There I got off my motorcycle and started to walk into a cold, wet alley to get to the back door of the store. I opened it with my right hand, got inside and slid my identification card through a slot on the right hand side of an inner door made of titanium. It slid sideways to my left.

To my surprise there were no lights on except for the lights in the computer laboratory. I took my gun out of my pocket and held it in my right hand. Then I went and put my back against the wall to the right of the door and turned into the open doorway only to see Cansy working. He turned to look at me with an angry frown on his face. Then he stood up and took a swing at me with his left fist. I ducked down just in time. I got up while he was laughing and saying, "Hahaha, L.. L.. was just kidding!"

Now that made me feel stupid. In a calmer, deeper voice Cansy said, "Come on, let's get out of here."

Cansy took the secret chip—even our boss wouldn't tell us how valuable it was—and we left the building. We took the company's small black sports car. I backed it out of the driveway and onto Johnson Ave. We went through the city streets until we got onto Route 9W. We rode for another fifteen minutes and then got off on Down St., and then onto Sixtieth. I parked right in front of Cadillac Corp. and saw three men about 6 feet-tall standing there.

We got out of the car, me on the left, Cansy on the right. One of the men shot Cansy in the arm and the others missed me. I took out my revolver with my right hand, squatted down, and rested my gun on the hood of the car. Bang! I shot one of them in the chest. He fell backwards and broke the large plate glass window of the headquarters with his head. Bang! bang! One of their bullets hit me in my left arm. It hurt like hell!! I could see the blood dripping down my arm through my shirt. "Bang! Bang!" I shot both of the other men.

Delivering the chip would just have to wait. Cansy and I knew where we were going next—to see Dr. Kennedy, who wouldn't ask too many questions.

I opened the door to the car and Cansy jumped in after me. I drove about 100 miles an hour to Kennedy's house. I could feel the blood pouring down my arm. I knew I was almost unconscious from blood loss. Cansy was already out cold. I ran to the door as fast as I could. I rang the doorbell and Kennedy opened it with a grin on his face. "I haven't seen you here in a while," he said cheerfully.

"Shut up! Here's fifty dollars. My friend's in the car; drag him in and I'll pay you the rest later." The doctor hesitated, then told one of his assistants to drag Cansy in. They told me to lie on a table, so I did; and then they gave me a drug. I don't know what it was and I can't remember anything that happened after that. When I woke up, I was lying next to Cansy on a thin white cot with a cast on my arm. Damn! I had a big fever, too. Cansy was still sleeping.

Kennedy walked in and said, "The fee will be three thousand dollars and I want it by next month. You'll be fine. Just come back in three weeks to a month so I can take your cast off, and tell your stupid friend the same thing when he wakes up."

I nudged Cansy in his good arm and said, "Cansy! Wake up, let's get out of this place."

He made a groaning sound, then sat up and said, "Where are we?"

"We're at Kennedy's," I replied.

"OK, lets go," responded Cansy.

I rolled off the bed and onto my feet. Cansy did the same. We found our way out of the building and walked down the path to the car. I stepped out into the street and got in the driver's side door. Cansy checked in his coat pocket for the chip. "Damn!!!!!" he said. "Someone's stolen it. Kennedy's probably working for those slugs we met up with at Cadillac Corp."

"We have to get it back now." I picked my jacket up off the car floor and reached into my pocket and pulled my gun out to see if I had any bullets left. There was only one. I slipped my gun back into my right pocket. Since Cansy had dropped his gun at Cadillac Corp. when he was shot, I left him in the car and started back up the path alone. I rang the bell and Kennedy opened the door. I pulled my gun out and pointed it at Kennedy's chest and whispered, "Where's the chip?"

"What chip?" Kennedy answered softly.

I pressed the gun hard into Kennedy's chest and repeated myself.

"It's in a cabinet under the computer," he said and then handed me the key.

I turned around and started walking to the computer. Ahhh! Kennedy hit me in the side of the head. I fell to the floor, pulled out my gun and shot him in the knee. He dropped, screaming. Two men burst in. Seeing the gun in my hand, they stood still. I opened the cabinet under the computer with the key, took the chip out and started walking backwards toward the door. I glanced at it and then opened it with my left hand, and walked out backwards. Then and I turned and ran. They chased me, running at full speed. I turned and pulled the trigger. "Click," I was out of bullets. Suddenly I felt a rush of anger. "Why the hell is this chip so important? "

to be continued.....

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Surprise
by Ted Becker

A quick blur a flash in my eyes
quick as lightning surprise
on a roller coaster ride I tried
but they were just too strong
they even knew they were wrong
they were knocking on my door
but no one's there no more

CLASSIC INTERVIEWS MAYOR CORNING

The following is reprinted with permission of the *Free School Classic*, a monthly newspaper produced by fifth grade students at the Free School.

On May 26, 1982, four reporters from the Classic *interviewed the Mayor of Albany in his office at City Hall. They asked him the following questions about himself and his job:*

The *Classic*: Where were you born?

Mayor Corning: On Chesnut Street in Albany. My mother and father lived in a small house just below Lark. I was born on October 7, 1909.

C: Where did you grow up?

M C: We lived there for awhile and then we moved to Washington Avenue, and then my mother and father built a house just south of the city line in Bethlehem, on land that my great-grandfather had bought in the 1830s. I lived there until I went to college, and then when I came back I got married and my wife and I lived in a different house on the same property and finally in a different house in the city where we have lived ever since.

C: What did you want to be when you grew up?

M C: I didn't know. I liked going to school, and I liked camping and fishing and things like that.

C: What was the Great Depression like?

M C: Well, I was just out of college, had just gotten married, and just gotten a job; so it didn't seem to me like an awful thing at all. But there were a lot of things about it that weren't good, and I was fortunate because I had already gotten a good job when I graduated. It didn't pay a great deal, but then you didn't need a great deal of money in those days. And things weren't quite so bad here in Albany because it's the state capital. A lot of people worked for the state and got paid that way.

C: When were you married?

M C: In June of 1932, two days after I graduated from college—when I was twenty years old.

C: Did you have any children?

M C: Two—a boy and a girl. They aren't exactly kids any more; my son was born in 1933, so he is 49 now; and my daughter was born in 1938, so she is 44.

C: How did you become interested in being Mayor?

M C: Well, my great-grandfather was mayor, my grandfather was an alderman, my father was state Democratic chairman and also Lieutenant Governor under Al Smith, and so I kind of got used to politics very early.

Then my father was taken very sick in 1928, in his last year as Lieutenant Governor. He was only forty-four and he died when he was fifty. It was after he died that I got into politics. First I was an Assemblyman, and then a State Senator for five years, and finally I was elected Mayor of Albany in 1931, when I was thirty-two. I've been hanging around here ever since.

C: Who was your opponent when you first ran for Mayor?

M C: A fellow named Benjamin Hoff; he was a retired banker.

C: Who was your hardest competitor?

M C: Mr. Carl Touhey, who I ran against in 1973—he came the closest to beating me. Carl's son, Charles, ran against me a year ago.

C: How strong and in control did you feel when you first became Mayor?

M C: Well, it was all new to me and Pearl Harbor had just happened, so it was a very confusing, very odd, very difficult time and not at all easy being Mayor.

C: How about now?

M C: All I can tell you now is that in my forty-one years I learned something about the job. So I know more about it now than most people. When you know more about something and like the work, it gives you a feeling of confidence, and that's what I feel now.

C: What was your biggest accomplishment as Mayor?

M C: Oh, I don't know. I think the thing I like the best, though it doesn't show very much, is the continuing work for all kinds of handicapped people. I've always been interested in helping the handicapped and I think I've done quite a lot in that field. I've seen the whole picture change, and now handicapped people have much better opportunities than they used to.

C: What do you like about being Mayor?

M C: I like doing things for people every day, and visiting people every day and talking to lots of people every day. I dictate letters to people who write me every day. I send fifteen to twenty thousand letters a year out of here. I think the largest number of letters I wrote in a day is 150.

C: What don't you like about being Mayor?

M C: They are probably the things that you don't like about life in general, like when you want to do something and you can't. It makes it hard; but on the other hand, that's how life is.

C: What does your family think of your being Mayor?

M C: Well, they put up with it, I suppose. What I mean is that I'm out so much, and I think they wish I were around more. But, they recognize that it's something that I like to do and that I feel good doing.

C: Does your wife work with you?

M C: Not too much; she tends to be much more active in all kinds of gardening clubs and in growing plants from all over the world. She is even busier than I am, and she travels much more than I do. She is president of the Garden Club of America, the director of the Horticultural Society of America and also of the New York Botanical Gardens in the Bronx. She has traveled all over the world to give lectures and she does a lot of photographing of plants and landscapes. One of her best lectures is on China. So you see she's had a very different and active other career. If you're going to have a political career, you haven't got much time for anything else. But I try to help my wife in the garden when I have time, though I'm just untrained, unskilled labor.

C: What are some of the changes which have occurred in Albany since your first term as Mayor?

M C: Well, there are a lot of good things that have happened. For instance, a lot of new buildings have been built, and a lot of old buildings are being fixed up, much more than when I was first Mayor. The other big change is that the business of running a city is much more complicated now because the state and federal governments are actively involved, which they weren't in the old days.

C: What are you doing about all of the old boarded up buildings in our neighborhood with the white numbers painted on them?

M C: Those are all owned by the city now and we are working as hard as we can with the federal government to get the money to rehabilitate them. We done a lot of them already, as you can see on Chesnut, Lancaster, Jay, Hudson and now Grand St. The rest have been secured with the red plywood, and we are going to fix them up, too; but you can't just do it all at once. And it just wasn't possible until we got the federal funds to do it with. You see, in this state you can't very well use state money for private people, you have to use federal. Those only became available seven or eight years ago, and we're using them just as much as we know how.

C: What do you think about nuclear war?

M C: I am very much against it. I just wrote a letter to the newspaper last March to tell people how strongly I feel about it. There isn't any way I know of that we can keep piling up more and more of these things without somebody pulling the trigger, and that would be a terrible catastrophe.

C: How long do you plan to be Mayor?

M C: Well. I was reelected last fall and I took another oath of office on January first of this year for another four-year term. I am seventy-two years old now and you don't look as far ahead at seventy-two as you did at thirty-two.

So, I am living every day by itself. I hope to finish this term out, and if by some chance, I feel as good as I do today, maybe I will try again. But, I just don't know...

Mosaic *Editors' postscript: When the staff of the Classic returned to City Hall two weeks later to present Mayor Corning with a copy of their paper, they were told by his secretary that the Mayor had had to leave work early. The evening news would later reveal that Mayor Corning had been rushed to the hospital, where he would continue on as Mayor until his death the following year.*

In the course of putting together our magazine Mosaic, *the editorial staff decided to interview Albany's current mayor Jennings as an interesting contrast/comparison with the earlier student interview with Mayor Corning:*

INTERVIEW WITH MAYOR GERALD JENNINGS

Mosaic: Did you ever think you would become the Mayor of Albany when you were a kid?

Mayor Jennings: As a kid, probably not. You know how when you're young you usually don't look that far ahead. But sometimes my family was involved in politics, and so politics was always interesting to me.

M: Who were your idols when you were growing up?

M J: I had a kind of mentor who was a Roman Catholic Priest and his name was Father Feerie. He kept me focused on education and extracurricular activities and sports. He especially impressed on me the importance of a good education. He was my number one idol, I guess you could say.

M: Where were you born?

M J: I was born right here in Albany in the old Brady Hospital. I lived in North Albany then.

M: What was the neighborhood like?

M J: It was a strong Irish community. It was also referred to as Limerick and there were a lot of great families. I went to Public School Twenty and I took religious instructions at Sacred Heart School. I played baseball there in the Little League, too. It was a great community to grow up in.

M: How did you do in school?

M J: It depended, you know, on what courses I took. I mean we all have our favorites. I like history; maybe that's why I became a history teacher after I graduated from college. In general, I had to study hard to achieve what I wanted.

M (Jessica, who is presently having them installed): Did you have braces when you were a kid (laughing)?

M J: (laughing) No, I didn't. But there's certainly nothing wrong with having braces!

M: What hobbies did you have?

M J: Sports, for sure. I liked baseball and basketball, and I liked to fish once in awhile. We had a camp. Basically my hobbies were centered around sports and physical activities.

M: Do you still do them?

M J: I try to. As I get older (laughter), it takes more wear and tear on me, though. I try to stay in shape.

M: Why did you want to be a principal?

M J: Well, I was the Vice-Principal at Albany High School, having started teaching there in 1970. I taught for several years and then I went to SUNY for my Masters in Education Administration. First I did an internship, and then I got certified, and then I was hired for the position. I was young to be an administrator, but I liked young people and I wanted to be in the position where I could help young people in the city make good decisions and learn from wrong decisions. That basically kept me going in education—I loved working with kids.

Now, I really miss them. I go back to visit whenever I get the chance. I see a lot of the kids on the street. I liked every one of the students I came across. I tried to impress upon kids that there aren't any problems that we can't resolve, that even if you think they're very difficult, there are at least people who you can talk to, whether it's a mentor, or a guardian, or a parent or teacher. There are ways for us to work together to solve problems.

M: Did the students like you?

M J: If I didn't discipline them too much! Basically it was a matter of I would respect them and they would respect me. You know, I had a job to do; and I would give it to them straight and they would give it to me straight. I've grown to know a lot of young people that now work for the city and work for the school district and have families of their own. And some of them had a difficult time, and now they're successful. They see me and they thank me, and they know I'm their friend. That's what's important.

M: Do you have any children of your own?

M J: I have one son who's twenty-five years old now. He just graduated from law school in Boston. Now he's a practicing attorney down in Florida.

M: Do you like being Mayor?

M J: Yes, I do. It's a very busy, busy job. It's sixteen hours a day. It's a very demanding job; but I'm in a position where I feel I can make some positive changes in this community. And that's important.

M: Is it better than your job as Vice-Principal?

M J: It's busier, that's for sure. And I can impact the quality of life issues that affect people every day on a much broader scale than I could as a high school administrator.

M: Why did you run for Mayor?

M J: Well, before that I was a city Alderman for about thirteen years, and I would stand up and criticize some of the initiatives that were being talked about and implemented in the city. It was kind of frustrating to see some of the things that were happening that were negative. Finally I said to myself, "Instead of criticizing all the time, why don't you get involved in the fray and run for Mayor. And then, hopefully, if you get elected you can make some positive changes."

M: How do compare yourself to the last two mayors?

M J: That's not a fair question!! I mean one guy was in there for forty-one years, and the other guy... Really, I don't like to compare myself to other people. What I like to do is evaluate what I feel has to be done here, and see if I've been successful at it. And the people of the city will judge that as well.

M: Did you look up to Mayor Corning?
M J: I knew Mayor Corning. He was a strong leader, and those were certainly different times then. And I learned from him that for an elected official, politics are about helping people. I try to remember that on a daily basis when I make decisions here in the city.
M: What's your favorite part about being mayor?
M J: As I said, being in a position where I can effect change, and hopefully get people to believe that things can improve. It's really just trying to do what I was trying to accomplish with young people as a teacher, only on a much broader scale.
M: If I worked for you, how would I get on your good side?
M J: By just working for me. If you worked for me—and you could if you wanted to—you would be qualified. I believe in bringing in people who really, really care about the city, who want to make positive change and who will follow through.
M: What if I ended up on your bad side?
M J: We'd sit here and talk. And I'm not sure you'd be on my bad side; but if you were, with some positive dialogue and discussion, I think we could resolve most of our differences. I don't have a tough time getting along with people.
M: If you were granted three wishes for Albany, what would they be?
M J: Hmmm... An elimination of crime, a very high success rate for young people when it comes to school and financial stability for the city—I think those would be my first three.
M: What do you think of Governor Pataki?
M J: Your tape isn't long enough (laughing). No, that can't be my answer to that question. Seriously, I've had some conversations with the Governor and we've met privately several times, and I continue to stress with him that this is the capital city and therefore it can't be ignored. So I'm looking toward the state—not just Governor Pataki, but the Legislature as well—to recognize that Albany is important, and that we need to be treated just like any other city.
M: Would you ever like to be Governor?

M J: No, I can't see that. I like to be at this level of government because you can still be hands on. You can still deal directly with people on a daily basis; you know how people get elected and then they forget... This job is a reality check for me, so that when I'm walking or riding around the city, I feel I can have an idea of what people are actually experiencing and make decisions accordingly.

M: Do you think you will run for Mayor again next time?

M J: That would be a scoop I'd be giving your magazine. Really, I'm not sure. I'm in the third year of my term now and by the end of this year I'll probably make my decision.

M: What do you think of the world today as opposed to when you were a kid?

M J: Well, there's many, many more distractions for young people growing up now. I think the media and TV in particular have had a negative impact on kids. You know, when I go to schools, I tell them that if I had my way I'd shut off M TV and a few of these other channels for three or four hours so you'd know that would be a homework period. That idea is not too well received in some schools, but I think all these distractions are making it much more difficult to grow up.

All I ask you young people to do is to reevaluate your responsibilities, to try to set some of the distractions aside, and to consider that education is your number one priority—so that you can be the leaders of tomorrow.

The following sage piece of advice to her town was sent to us by a frequent contributor ot ΣΚΟΛΕ, Emanuel Pariser, co-director of The Community School in Camden, Maine. Becca, the writer, is a graduate of his school. Thanks, Em and Becca!

Guest Column: ***From*** **The Camden Herald** • ***Dec. 14, 1995*** • ***Page 5***

RETHINK TREATMENT OF CAMDEN'S YOUTH

by Becca Glaser

At 5 years old, I was America's most important asset. People waved hello to me and said I was darling. Now that I am 18 and use my voice to express my opinions, people often see me as a threat. When I greet a fellow Camden citizen on the street, more often than not he or she ignores my hello and continues walking by. For years society has been ignorant as to how to care for and work with its young adults. Society loves its young children only to spurn them when they age. My rights are being threatened by the Camden Community Association. By outrightly declaring that they need to take "corrective action" towards the young people who congregate in the park, they pave the way for targeting youth as a scapegoat. It is outrageous that such a blatant prejudice against any one group can still be taken so seriously.

Human existence is based on community. American society has been so absorbed by television and computers and money that community has become less and less a valued part of our culture. I see the kids in the park as a community within a community. Though we are just as much a product of this society as our parents and grandparents, we face rejection by a large part of society simply because of our non-conformity. Society is uncomfortable with our ideas, which are often deviant from the accepted norm. So we come together as a group to share ideas, dreams, and feelings. Isn't it preferable that we come together in the middle of Camden where our activities are seen rather than somewhere in the woods? We are citizens, just the same as anyone or any age from Hope, Camden, Rockport, Lincolnville and anywhere else. We are just as much an important part of this "lovely town" as anyone.

Throughout history, the established world has often felt threatened by a group of people sharing ideas. Perhaps many adults in the midcoast area fear that our thoughts are too deviant from their own. Perhaps they would like to separate us so that we can no longer support each other. We are just verging on adulthood; we are learning how to interact and react to the world we are faced with. If we are mistreated, we will respond by mistreating others. What we all need to learn is that we all live here together as equal people with equal rights to enjoy the park and the town.

Camden-Rockport High School is also exemplary of this age-old mistreatment of young adults. I am disturbed by the school's new plan concerning the drug and alcohol use of its students. Despite the school board's belief, I don't believe that creating more rules and punishments will improve the school. It seems to me that the high school is desperately scrambling for something to blame for its high dropout rate. It is addressing a symptom rather than the cause. If its classes were more inspiring, perhaps students would choose sobriety.

It seems to me that the high school is desperately scrambling for something to blame for its high dropout rate. It is addressing a symptom rather than the cause.

The high school is in desperate need of new faculty. Of course there are also really great teachers at C-RHS, but there are many well-known cases of incompetent and disrespectful teachers and administrators. Some teachers call their students derogatory names during class, and few of Camden-Rockport's teachers are excited to teach. Throughout my two years at C-RHS it was a rare occasion when I felt as though a faculty member cared about me as a person, as an individual. I found my classes dull, unchallenging, and unenlightening. Camden-Rockport High School needs to treat its students as equal people with equal ideas, dreams and aspirations. Classrooms should not be oppressive dictatorships, they should be places in which to grow, to learn, have fun and create.

Eventually, I left the school and graduated from the Community School, an absolutely wonderful establishment. There, each person is valued and cared for as an important member of its system. They brought hope after the public high school had failed me. C-RHS will fail a greater number of its students if it continues to focus on the symptoms (like drug and alcohol use, though devastating) rather than the root cause—its disrespect for its students. It must begin to listen more and preach less.

Camden, as well as all of America, needs to rethink how it treats its youth. If we are treated with respect, we will respect others in return. I suggest that rather than supply a special teen police officer as a go-between, that Norm Bacon and Co. just come talk with the kids in the park. The adults may feel threatened by the youth presence, but I know the kids feel equally threatened by the adults. Yes, it's idealistic, but everyone has got to treat each other respectfully. The next time I walk downtown, I want people to say hello to me.

Homeschooling: the best you can do for your family!

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Review:

FIRE READY!
by Eric Dean
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Bookcrafters Distribution Center
615 E. Industrial Drive
Chelsea, MI 48118
1-800-879-4214

Reviewed by Robert L. Kastelic, Ed.D.

Most of us are familiar with putting out fires. Some fires are as small as candles or matches. Others are larger, like kitchen fires or that barbecue grill which got out of control last summer in the back yard. Many of us have also spent a lot of time watching fires. On a typical camping trip many people will spend a great deal of time collecting firewood and building a fire. We seem to have a deeply rooted connection with fire. Seldom do we ever witness at first hand the consequence of a careless campfire or a fire caused by natural occurrences. On a much larger scale we all watched in horror as Yellowstone National Park burned for weeks as a natural inferno.

Fire Ready! is Eric Dean's first-hand account of the life of the wildfire firefighters. Here is a book that delivers the reader a ringside seat into the daily life and the challenges of the men and women who are fighting fires. This book is far from just another ho hum story.

There are lifelong lessons tucked into every chapter. It would be difficult to share a story of such work and not include examples of teamwork and cooperation. Crews from all over the country come together to work on the fire line. There don't appear to be any lines of discrimination, but instead a unified effort is made toward achieving a common goal by each of the firefighters.

The fires selected by the author have a southwestern hot chili flavoring about them. Dean is constantly injecting some bits of spice, a dash of wit, and a hearty helping of humor. The reader may often feel as though he is indeed right there at the scene. Events draw in the reader to be with the crew ready to engage in the efforts of controlling the fire or preparing for the next situation to occur. Many skills are juggled in order for all of the variety of jobs to be completed. Skills, coupled with the values of persistence, personal motivation and keen leadership, confront the reader at every turn. There are clear reminders in this book of the importance of having learned these life skills long before one encounters the action scene.

Fire Ready! is a book about the lives of the wildfire firefighters in the field but I see it as something even more than that. It's a book that illustrates in an easy-to-understand format the value of being ready to encounter the fire and being prepared to encounter life. Hopefully, both will be done in a responsible fashion.

This story is about the grit, grime, and the physical rigor of a job that most of us look to with awe. It's about danger and adventure. It's a great book to recommend for those of you who see yourselves as adventurers. It lets you get the story of firefighting from someone who was there. The author, Eric Dean, has had a life of adventure. Having worked for the U.S. Forest Service, he was also a Squad Boss for the National Park Service. He taught kindergarten and elementary school in Taiwan, Republic of China, and studied Spanish in Costa Rica.

Because of such a rich life full of challenging experiences, the author presents situations in a vivid and colorful manner. In *Fire Ready!* Dean presents little things that allow readers to see the value of details. Getting back to base camp and eating well consumes a lot of time in the minds of many of the workers. There is a plethora of wonderful and challenging experiences shared by Dean. For example,

> Back at the fire camp at night, something wonderful happened. Comfortable in our sleeping bags, surrounded by our red packs, and boots, we looked up into the incredibly clear

> Nevada night—the stars overpowering in their countless abundance—and then it began to happen. A meteor shower! ... it was spectacular.

Or, the never-ending trials and unexpected experiences of people who work in dangerous situations.

> "Everyone got their chin straps on?" the driver always yelled before we started out. It was a new rule that we had to have hard hats secure before we could move out, and it was strictly enforced, ever since the year before, when a deuce in Idaho with a full load of firefighters in the back slipped off a logging road, and went over the edge, tumbling almost a thousand feet to the bottom of the slope, strewing wreckage and gear all over the hill and killing four of the firefighters.

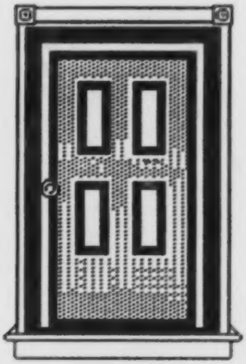
And another,

> At about 1 o'clock a whole bunch of calls came over the radio, like something really exciting was happening. I looked outside and jeez! the whole mountain was on fire.

From the Sheep Creek fire to a variety of other fires such as the Meadow Creek fire, Nail Canyon Burn, Oak Grove fire, the Kelsey Fire and many more, readers will gain some keen insights into the typical life of this extraordinary work. Crisscrossing the Southwest to fight fires and sharing work loads and risking their lives, the author weaves situations into stories that paint colorful pictures of those who fight fires in the wild. For these reasons and many others you may find *Fire Ready!* to be a 'hot spot' on your bookshelf.

* * *

Now hear this, all you kids. DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE! YOUR LIFE MAY BE IN DANGER IF YOU DO! PLEASE TAKE THE ADVICE OF THE GROWN-UPS WHO ARE IN CHARGE HERE. STOP RIGHT HERE! THIS IS AN ORDER! STOP!!!



PLEASE DON'T OPEN THIS DOOR!!! STOP!!

O-H-H N-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O---

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO -- TO --

Warning! Danger, danger!

Don't open this door! Behind it lies the space for grown-ups! You don't want to go there, believe me!

Oh, no, it's already too late! The door is opening! Here it comes! It's...it's...it's...the GHOST OF THE FUTURE!!! CREAK! CREAK! I can't look!!! It's so dark! Why would you want to go any farther? Turn back! Don't go on! It's all grown-up stuff! Think of the violence! The ... the ... the big words! The boredom! The slavery! The crazy adults! The world out there is just too upsetting! Wars! Strikes! Dirty pictures! Jail! School! Teachers! Your teacher is an alien! She'll drain your brain! Bruce Coville says so! It's so scary! Please turn back before you become a vegetable for the rest of your life! Or dead! Please.e.e.e! WHY won't you listen? Turn back!

YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO JOHN SINGER!!

WELL ... I WARNED YOU!

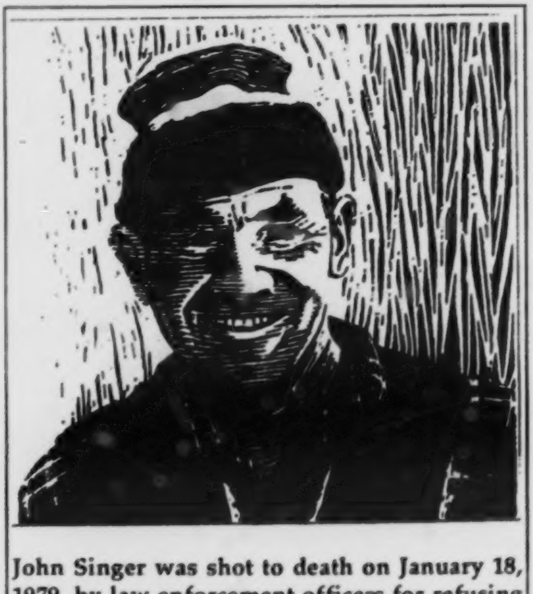
ADULT SECTION:

From Home Education Magazine • *July-August* • *1993*

JOHN SINGER, MARTYR OR FOOL?

by Carl Watner

Carl Watner and his wife homeschool their children, ages 6, 4 and 1. He is long-time editor of The Voluntaryist *newsletter. A complimentary copy may be requested from Box 1275, Gramling, SC 29348.*



John Singer was shot to death on January 18, 1979, by law enforcement officers for refusing to comply with Utah State directives regarding the education of his children.

An unlikely opening for an article appearing in *Home Education Magazine*, but the following saga of John Singer should be of interest to homeschoolers because it presents the dilemma of all conscientious homeschooling parents. Who has the final say in how children should be raised and educated? Who has the right to say what they are taught, and how they are taught? Should homeschool parents acknowledge State control in matters of schooling and submit to the State by complying with its regulations, or should they go their own way, as John and Vickie Singer did? In short, the case of John Singer epitomizes the question: Who ultimately controls the children in our society—their parents or the State? Were the Singers martyrs for standing up for their beliefs, or were they fools for resisting the State?

Although John Singer was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1931, his parents both originally German citizens, took him back to their native country shortly after his birth. There he experienced the horrors of Nazi regimentation and the chaos of World War II and its aftermath. Since he was a U.S. citizen he was allowed to emigrate back to the United States in 1946. He lived in New York City with his aunt, learned English, studied TV repair, and became a carpenter under his uncle's tutelage. Within a year after his mother, brother, and two sisters joined him, they had saved enough money to drive to Utah, the "promised land" of their faith, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Mormons.

By the time Singer married Vickie Lemon in September, 1963, he had built himself a log home in the Kamas Valley, where he farmed and plied his TV repair trade. He was described by David Fleisher and David Freedman, authors of his biography *(Death of an American,* New York: Continuum, 1983) as "a strong, independent, industrious man with an unwavering faith in his God." Seven years after their marriage, John and Vickie Singer were excommunicated from the Mormon Church for their continued insistence on believing on the literal interpretation of the Mormon Scriptures (including its original doctrine of plural marriage), and for taking the side of the fundamentalist rather than the modern church. Two years later, they withdrew their three school-age children from South Summit Elementary School, a public school in Kamas, Utah. The Singers objected to the "immoral secular influences" found in the Utah State-run schools, including "the school's 'permissive attitude' toward such immoral behavior as sexual promiscuity, drugs, crude language and gestures, rock music and lack of respect for adults." They believed that the State had no constitutional right to interfere with their religious beliefs by requiring them to send their children to public school.

This marked the beginning of the first phase of the Singers' resistance to public schooling. After an initial meeting in April, 1973, to explain their views to the Superintendent of the school district and the members of the Board of Education, the Singers received a letter informing them that they were in violation of the State's compulsory attendance law, which required attendance at a public or "regularly established" private school, or homeschooling subject to the approval of their local school district's Board of Education. On December 6, 1973 the School Board filed a complaint against John Singer in juvenile court for "the crime of contributing to the delinquency and neglect of his three oldest children, ages 6, 7 and 8." When Singer failed to appear in court to defend himself against the charges, the judge issued a bench warrant for his arrest. It took the sheriff and his deputies about a month to apprehend Singer, since he refused to surrender voluntarily. They surprised him while he was on a TV repair call. Singer spent the night in jail, and the following day agreed to a court-appointed attorney and to work with the school board on an approved homeschooling program. On March 8, 1974, the school board issued a certificate of exemption to the Singers, with the stipulation that the school board administer a Basic Skills Achievement Test to the four oldest Singer children twice a year, starting in the fall. The school psychologist, Tony Powell, was appointed to administer the tests and monitor the children's home education progress. Three months later, in June, 1974, the criminal complaint against John Singer was dismissed based on the evidence of his compliance.

John and Vickie Singer did not take lightly to regimentation. Although they allowed their children to be tested in October, 1974 and April, 1975, by April, 1976 they concluded that "they must get out from under the thumb of the local school district" because they resented bureaucratic intrusions into their home and family life. Consequently, they informed the district they would permit no further testing. They decided that they would educate their children according to their own religious beliefs without interference from the government. As they explained,

> We are responsible for our children, not the school board. They don't support or raise them, we do. We are true Americans, and the Lord has let us know that He will protect our constitutional freedoms. It is a corrupt government that passes a law that takes children away from their parents, and those people who try to enforce that law are tyrants." (pp. 61-62)

Thus began the second stage of their resistance. The local school board withdrew their exemption certificate, and initiated a new criminal complaint against them. After having attended several school board meetings and court hearings, on August 23, 1977, the Singers were present in the juvenile court of Judge Kent Bachman. The charge against them was, again, criminal neglect of their children. Representing himself, John refused to plead guilty. All his children were well cared for, none were "neglected," and he readily admitted that they did not attend public school. Singer's position was

> ... that the only thing I have to prove to this court is that my children are not being trained for any delinquency actions or any criminal actions, and this is the only thing I have to prove and nothing else.(p. 76)

Judge Bachman insisted that the only issue was whether the Singers "complied with the policies and standards set out for the education of your children" by the school board. (p. 81) Singer responded,

> But it seems like the standards which have been set out here are not the same standards I believe in....Have you even got the right to force my children under any form of education?

The judge concluded that the Singers were guilty of a misdemeanor and found them in violation of the compulsory attendance law. Both parents and children were to be evaluated by a court designated psychologist, Dr. Victor Cline. John and Vickie were each fined $299.00, and sentenced to 60 days in the county jail unless they met with the evaluating psychologist. Due to the publicity that their case was generating, the Singers were approached by supporters of private and home schooling, and urged to incorporate their own private school. Since Utah law was very vague on the requirements for a private school, it was thought they might use this loophole to escape the jurisdiction of Judge Bachman's juvenile court. Thus by the time they were summoned on November 1, to explain why they had failed to comply with the judge's order (four children had been tested and evaluated by Dr. Cline, but they themselves refused to submit), the Singers had formally incorporated their own private school, High Uintas Academy, Inc. Judge Bachman granted a stay, and held that if after one month the Singers did not comply with the order of August 23, "there will be incarceration for both of you."

On November 3, 1977 John and Vickie were interviewed and tested by Dr. Cline. In his written evaluation Dr. Cline noted,

> The Singers have put together a remarkably cohesive and happy family of nine people. The husband and wife have a strong marriage with much love and affection and mutual support between the two. They are greatly committed to the task of raising obedient, loving, responsible and resourceful children and are doing a truly remarkable job of this.

He gave glowing reports on both John and Vickie, but found the children to be on an average of 34 points lower in IQ than their parents, writing,

> Since intelligence is to a great extent inherited, the only logical reason for these children scoring so low would be (a) not having adequate educational experiences and (b) their isolation from other children who might stimulate them intellectually.

In the meantime, Judge Bachman had set a trial date for December 16, and decided to hold a pre-trial conference on November 5. In an effort to work out a peaceful compromise the judge agreed to vacate his order that they be jailed and pay a fine, if the Singers would submit an acceptable plan for the education of their children. This the Singers refused to do, because they believed the judge had improperly disregarded their efforts to form a private school. They also decided not to attend their December 16 trial for fear that their children would be physically taken from them. On December 16 Judge Bachman issued bench warrant for their arrest, and set bail at $300 each. Their case was continued to January 3,1978.

For the next year, John Singer was literally at war with the authorities, and did not set foot outside his farm. When contacted by the sheriff on the telephone, John informed him that he "intended to resist arrest." At the January 3 trial, on the basis of testimony from Dr. Cline, Judge Bachman found John and Vickie Singer guilty of child neglect. By now they had five school-age children who were ordered to submit to daily tutoring provided by the South Summit School District. If the Singers failed to comply with the tutoring program designed by the school district they would be held in contempt of court. The Singer children were to remain in the custody of the Utah Division of Family Services (Judge Bachman had first issued the custody ruling on August 23, 1977), but were allowed to remain at home with John and Vickie. After the trial John Singer told the press that he and Vickie would not allow a tutor into their home.

> We're not trying to tell other people what to believe or how to live, we just want to be left alone and mind our own business.

As a result of case reassignments a new judge entered the picture. Since the Singers would not comply with the school district's daily tutoring plan, on February 6, 1978 the new juvenile court judge, John Farr Larson, issued an order for the Singers and their children to appear in court March 14, 1978 to show cause as to why the parents should not be held in contempt, and why their children should not be taken from their home and placed in custody of the State. The Singers did not attend their show cause hearing on March 14. Judge Larson found them in contempt and issued bench warrants for their arrest. His order was stayed for 7 days to allow the Singers time to file an appeal. On March 21, the sheriff was ordered to commit both parents to jail for 30 days and each of them were ordered to pay a fine of $200.

The Singers refused to appeal their convictions (primarily on the basis that such actions were inconsistent with their religious beliefs). John had also previously told friends "I'd rather die than go against my religious beliefs." (p.111) When Judge Larson finally dissolved his stay of execution, he was quoted in the papers as saying,

> By law, children in this state have a right to an education, and a duty to attend school. Children are no longer regarded as chattels of their parents. They are persons with legal rights and obligations. The rights of the parents do [illegible] transcend the rights of a child to an education nor the child's duty to attend school. Parents who fear the negative influence of public education should also examine the damaging effects of teaching a child disobedience to law and defiance to authority." (p. 114)

The judge also directed the sheriff to arrest John Singer, but "to employ such means and take such time as are reasonably calculated to avoid the infliction of bodily harm on any person." (p. 144) After nearly six months of inaction, in October, 1978, Judge Larson removed the restriction about the use of violence from his arrest order, but he still set no time limit for Singer's apprehension. After consultation with State law enforcement officials, it was decided that they try to arrest Singer during a media interview, at which three law officers would pose as newsmen. This caper was foiled by Singer's strength, his family's immediate reaction (they jumped all over his would-be captors), and the pistol in Singer's waistband.

On October 20, 1978, the Summit County attorney filed a new criminal complaint, charging John with 3 counts of aggravated assault for resisting arrest with a gun. A felony warrant (which automatically permits the use of deadly force to effect an arrest) was issued so he could be taken into custody. Judge Larson was also reaching the end of his patience. Near the end of October, 1978, he threatened the county sheriff with a contempt-of-court citation if he—the sheriff—did not carry out the order to arrest Singer.

By early November, 1978, John Singer had been at a standoff with the authorities for the better part of a year. He was still in contact with the media via the telephone and friends. His predicament he believed, was caused as much by the Mormon Church as it was by the State of Utah. Speaking of his right to educate his children as he saw fit, John had said, "According to the State's system, my home is just a feeding place. All they want me to do is feed my children and then they want to take them from me and brainwash them and put them into a Sodom and Gomorrah society." (p. 158) The local and State government and its enforcement machinery found themselves in an increasingly embarrassing situation. One lone man was holding them at bay.

Something had to be done. The leadership of the Utah State Department of Public Safety, the Division of Narcotics and Liquor Law Enforcement, and Highway Patrol all became involved in a surveillance and apprehension plan. The key was to "surprise Singer with such a show of force that he would realize the futility of resisting arrest and would submit peacefully." (p. 170) Ten men, in five groups of two, were to watch Singer, learn his daily routines, and eventually confront him in such a fashion that he would have no choice but to submit.

On January 18, 1979, their plan was put into effect while John was clearing the snow off his driveway with a gas-powered snowblower. Although he had put down his rifle, Singer still had a thirty-eight Colt automatic tucked in his trousers. When approached by four of the lawmen, he turned, started running, and drew the pistol from its resting place. Feeling threatened for his personal safety, one of the officers fired his shotgun at Singer, and killed him with a single blast of buckshot.

In less than two hours, Vickie Singer was arrested and jailed, and social workers took the children into protective custody for nine days. The local and national press later protested Judge Larson's separation of Vickie from her children at such a tragic moment in their lives. In order to get them back, Vickie agreed to a court-approved plan whereby she could teach the children at home under the supervision of a private school acceptable to the juvenile court.

John Singer's death triggered widespread public reaction, including complaints from the media that autopsy details were being suppressed, bomb threats against the governor's office, and demands for a grand jury investigation. Vickie filed a $110 million lawsuit, through famed lawyer Gerry Spence, against Utah officials. Spence predicted that the case would ultimately result in a landmark decision involving the rights of parents to rear their children as they see fit. Spence stated,

> The question is, are we simply the custodians of our children for the benefit of the state, like some poor sharecropper is the custodian of his master's horses; or are we actually parents with the rights to determine how our children will be reared, the kinds of influences they will be subjected to, and the kind of education they will receive?

(Three years later in 1982, a Utah judge in a pretrial opinion stunned many of the onlookers by throwing the case out of court, claiming that the evidence was insufficient, and that, in effect, "it was John Singer's own rebellion that led to his death." Calling it a miscarriage of justice, Spence filed an appeal.)

A year and a half after his death, the judge who issued the contempt citation against the Singers finally terminated his jurisdiction over the Singer family. "The freedom that we've been fighting for has finally come through," declared Vickie Singer.

> But it's very ironic, to say the least, because now I'm teaching my kids the same way that John and I did before he died, and I think the State knows it. But all they wanted to do was show us, and show the people, that if anybody tried to come against the system, watch out because this is what can happen to you. And I think they tried to use John and me as an example. (p. 216)

Homeschooling, as the State has already recognized, contains an explosive force for change—in directions which do not readily meet with State approval. The State of Utah had little real concern for how the Singers treated, taught, or raised their children. It was interested only in eliciting obedience and showing the rest of its citizens that it, not the Singers, were sovereign in family matters. John Singer might have been a fool for believing the state would overlook his disobedience, but he was certainly not a fool for refusing to renounce his firmly held beliefs—even in the face of death.

Editor's note: The fascinating and chillingly factual book this article references, Death of an American *(New York: Continuum, 1983), by David Fleischer and David M. Freedman is "a true story that takes the reader through important constitutional and educational issues, and deep into one man's fight for personal and religious freedom." David Fleischer was the first reporter to write about the Singer case, winning two Utah Press Association awards for his coverage. David M. Freedman, previously editor for* Trial Diplomacy Journal, *moved to Utah in 1982 to devote full time to the book.*

Michael Massurin, a new friend of ΣΚΟΛΕ, is currently serving out a term in Collins Correctional Facility in Collins, NY. I don't know what he did that put him there (and I don't really need to know!), but I like very much what's he's doing with his life and his evident thoughtfulness. Send us more of your thoughts, Michael! We need your witness.

WHO AM I?

Expanding Self-Awareness in Students

by Michael Massurin

As far as we know, we are the only species on the planet capable of asking and sometimes even adequately answering the complex question "Who Am I?" This seemingly simple question has been asked throughout our history. There are no right or wrong answers. Rather what we have are a series of statements, reflections, observations and offhand remarks all passing as answers. These will be based in part upon a person's age, experiences, ability to honestly examine self and of course their education. It is this later topic, education and more specifically the role that formal education can play in determining how a person answers this vexing question that I wish to briefly examine.

Now some may say that it is of little practical use to have children or teenagers asking themselves this question and struggling to come up with an answer. Complaints abound that students today are not even learning the basics in some school systems. To introduce abstract concepts such as this would seem to make little sense. Especially when we as adults have a difficult enough time trying to answer this. Why challenge our youth to search for this Grail? Why indeed.

Many experts in childhood development and psychology have determined that general life orientation is formed early on. Patterns begin to form at an early age as does self-perception. While some patterns can and will be shaped as a child grows, others on a deeper level become fixed. The educational system plays an important role in helping children form core values and a sense of self-identity. At this juncture I believe we need to ask the questions: Should schools play a larger role in helping student explore and better understand who they are? If so, can this role be expanded? Finally, how might this be done in a practical manner within the current system?

Turning to the first question, it would seem clear that the educational system has a mandate to prepare our children as best they can to become productive members of society and encourage ongoing self-growth throughout life. Society, the job market and even traditional roles are undergoing major changes and restructuring. Quantum leaps are being made at many levels. In an ever increasingly diverse and changing world, it will be necessary for all systems, including the educational system to revamp their approaches and meet new challenges. Likewise individuals will be challenged to grow and change throughout their lifetime. By encouraging students at all ages to more closely examine their self-identity, teachers can begin better preparing them for the multifaceted and increasingly changing roles they will have to undertake as they mature and society undergoes further changes. Unless students are taught how to honestly examine themselves and provide updated answers to the questions of who am I and what roles must I now play in this changing landscape, they may stagnate and be left behind. As the information age evolves, so too should our understanding of self.

Looking further into this question, we need to consider the role that the educational system plays not only in teaching formal concepts but also in the socialization process of children. Social skills are taught and hopefully learned to some degree. It is not only important but increasingly essential to help students to develop a positive sense of self along with positive socialization skills. Having some level of understanding about who am I and my role in society can encourage them to form more pro-social bonds and model positive behavioral traits. With violence on the upswing throughout the school system, any process that can reverse this trend would seem a step in the right direction. A positive sense of self usually encourages more positive social interactions. This can help form a basis for future growth and becoming a productive member of society. Also as global integration and teamwork become more the norm, knowing who you are and how you can "fit in", becomes a more necessary trait. A student who is challenged throughout their academic career to answer the question "Who am I?" in a positive manner may emerge not only with a better self-concept but also a higher social consciousness. Some may still be convinced that it is of little use to have students examine such an abstract concept. It is tempting to dismiss this in favor of more practical courses of study but there may be risks here. If educators simple allow students to answer who am I for themselves, they may formulate negative self-perceptions. There is a sense of hopelessness amongst our youth. Others choose to identify with negative peer groups and model anti-social behavior. If students are allowed to answer the question of who am I with "I don't know," "I am a nobody," or worse yet "I am a problem," we run the risk of not only losing that student but also seeing society fracture on an even larger scale. Educators need to challenge students to ask "who am I" and come up with a positive identity and affirmations. It has become increasingly clear that a positive self-esteem leads to a healthier life on all levels. It seems evident then that if school systems work towards this goal they will also fulfill their mandate to society.

Can courses that help students examine and expand their identity be implemented in school systems? The answer here is yes. There are already innovative programs/projects in place that challenge our students in this direction. Some educational television shows can even help children to learn more about themselves. However, the need to expand the quest for self-awareness is needed at all levels. Our educational system, especially at the elementary and secondary level, present students with many facts, figures and a basic knowledge of our world. All of this is certainly needed and useful in navigating life both within school and on the outside. This common body of knowledge and skills gives our culture an identity. However when it comes to answering the question "Who am I?", this body of knowledge may be of limited use. Usually it is only later on as a student enters into high school, more often college that abstract concepts and serious inquiries into self-identity begin to become part of their learning and development. Yet this does not have to be so nor should it. The question then arises how do schools practically implement programs of self-inquiry?

Achieving this goal, at least on some level need not be all that difficult. Most children tend to be curious and display traits of creativity. Often this creativity, this sense of wonder is stifled as a child advances through the school system. They do what teachers tell them or what they believe they want. While discipline and a sense of order are certainly needed, there should also be a balance that allows creativity and self-exploration. If students are encouraged to examine their self-identity, to build self-esteem, this may become part of their life pattern. Asking the "big" questions and struggling for an answer are experiences educators need to encourage and if need be create in the classroom. Students at all ages should explore their feelings and thoughts about self and other. Have them look at their role within the family, class, school, community and world. Have each student develop a positive and also honest picture of themselves. Help them build self-esteem while teaching about constructive criticism. This sense of self, along with the ability to respect and communicate with others, may be one of the most important skills needed in this fast-paced and changing world.

Should schools play a larger role in helping students to explore and build their self-identity? The answer would seem to be yes. It is needed. Can schools do this? Again, the answer would seem to yes. It is already being done on some level. What needs to happen is a more concerted effort for students at all ages. This will be done through creativity, by expanding discussions within the classroom, teaching flexible thinking skills, building self-esteem and simply asking our students to honor their uniqueness and respect the same in others. It may not be easy but at the same time it is not impossible.

Society is made up of individuals. As one evolves, so must the other. Today change is constant on a global scale. The challenges our children will be faced with are likely to be far greater than those of today. Without a clear sense of self-identity and where they fit into this global picture, they may never reach their full potential. This will be a loss for them and society. The educational system cannot offer any guarantee that each and every student will reach this peak, but an honest effort needs to be put forth in all cases. Let the answer to the question "Who am I?" be "I Am The Best I Can Be."

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Chris Mercogliano has given us one more chapter from his forthcoming book, Making It Up As We Go Along. *Hope you like it. We do.*

FIXING A DESK, MENDING A MIND

by Chris Mercogliano

Perhaps the biggest problem with the institution of education in this country is the blind faith we consumer/believers place in it. On the societal level, we assume that one day the system will somehow solve enormous historical and social problems like race and class disparity and prejudice, as well as the increasingly apparent breakdown of moral, ethical and spiritual values among our people. And on the individual level, we increasingly depend on schools to teach our kids everything we think they will need to know in order to live successful lives and to become responsible citizens.

Meanwhile, despite mounting evidence that our schools simply are incapable of accomplishing these Herculean tasks (nor were they ever intended to, if you carefully read the words of the fathers of compulsory education), the feedback loop between our expectations and the official rhetoric seems to grow stronger by the decade. And issues like race, class, and values continue to be handled in an entirely theoretical and ideological manner. Attempts at solutions to perceived problems are based on massive statistical analyses, aimed at the needs of some hypothetical average child who never has existed and never will, and are always top-down in nature. In other words, the strategies pursued by our schools, even when they are propelled by the best of intentions, rarely, if ever, apply to real individual children. And therefore, they rarely succeed. As a result, huge cracks have opened up over the years, into which growing numbers of children are falling, and we are left to wonder—is anybody noticing; does anybody care?

Continuing this same line of questioning: what if we were to start retrieving kids from those cracks (I find it more than interesting that "crack" is the street name for the highly addictive cocaine derivative which is responsible for the most recent wave of deterioration to hit our cities) one by one? What if we were to look them over real good as individuals—not for the purposes of a sociological study, but with the intention of helping them to complete the process of growing up—what would we find?

Take Jesse, for example, who has been with us about a year now. He arrived with a long history of school troubles, both academic and behavioral. Thankfully, Jesse's mother noticed that he was falling between the cracks. And thankfully, she sensed that it wasn't her fault, or her son's either; so that her caring wasn't consumed by blame or fear—or both—as is so often the case. In the end it was she who cared enough to seek out the right alternative for her struggling twelve-year-old.

Big for his age, often foul-mouthed and prone to harassing smaller kids, Jesse, nevertheless (thank God), is not a tough kid. At least not yet. There is still a certain physical softness about him which can also be found beneath the veneer of jive talk and intimidation, somewhere in the region of the heart. Or in other words, the "Yo, don't mess with me" posturing is just that, a protective mask covering layers of raw, untreated woundings that extend a long way back, maybe even into the womb.

Loss has been Jesse's almost constant companion. His mother (now fully recovered) was virtually lost to drug addiction for much of his early childhood; then his older brother died when Jesse was seven, and his father not long after that. His favorite uncle, very much a traditional godfather figure, is currently dying of cancer. So what happens to a child who has a lifetime of loss packed into a single, abbreviated childhood?

The answer, of course, is never a simple one; and the outcome—whether that boy or girl survives intact or is swallowed up by the same life-denying patterns of existence passed down from previous generations—will be determined by many factors, some originating inside, some coming from outside of the child's home. In Jesse's case, thanks in large part to a gutsy mother who managed to find the courage to face her demons and reclaim her life and family, and to a new stepfather who is on a very similar path, Jesse has not hardened against his pain, and therein lies the source of his salvation.

What this deep wounding does to virtually all children, I think, regardless of their circumstances, is to lay them wide open to the influence of the worst aspects of the popular culture. This is so obvious with Jesse. When I actually listen to what he is saying when he's running his mouth, I realize the words come right from the latest gansta rap hit. His presenting attitudes and mannerisms are straight off the street corner. Not long ago, he even showed up with an old worn out beeper on his belt for a few days; and when he realized that no one was the least bit impressed, it disappeared just as suddenly.

Meanwhile, most of the time the real Jesse is hiding just out of sight, very easy to find if only you know where to (and care to) look. He appears at first glance to be your stereotypically "hyperactive" kid—impulsive, aggressive, short attention span, can't sit still for very long, and so on. But just watch him for a minute or so when he is tired (fortunately, his battery does run down from time to time), and you will see the depression, the grief, the pain, the fear, the anger, the disappointment from which all of his hyperactivity serves to distract him (and others). The truth of the matter is, as is so with any good magician, three-quarters of Jesse's act is simply a diversion to lure your eyes away from what is really going on.

None of this is to say that Jesse is a dishonest child; in fact, when push comes to shove he is perhaps the most honest person in his class. Though he doesn't quite realize it yet, his pain has been his teacher for a long time. It has deepened him and given him thoughts about things of which most kids have only yet to scratch the surface. The other kids know this about Jesse and it helps them to tolerate his all-too-frequent bouts of obnoxiousness.

The repair work to Jesse's heart began the day he entered our school. In actuality, it probably began the day Jesse's mother decided to take hold of her life again; but here I will only tell the part which

I have been around to witness as Jesse's teacher. It began when we told him that he was free to do as he pleased in school, as long as he was respectful and didn't violate the rights or sensibilities of others. It began when we told his parents that he might go an entire year without doing any apparent schoolwork, but not to worry because he was a perfectly intelligent and capable child who would be more than able to catch up academically as soon as *he* chose to invest himself in the process. And it began with Jesse coming to school every day because he *wanted* to and not because he *had* to.

Even today, after all these years, I still sometimes find myself stopping to ask how we could possibly tell a boy who was a certified failure by conventional school standards and who was years behind academically (again by conventional school standards) that he didn't have to do any schoolwork. And where do we find the *hutzpah* to ask his parents not to worry about the academic progress of a twelve-year-old whom they have been told for years is headed for disaster? Always, the quicker I respond to these outbreaks of profound doubt the better; and every time, the answer to the question is the same: *the heart will lead the head every time.*

And so we began by simply setting Jesse free, free from the pressure of an academic timetable and its endless performance assessments, free from constant behavioral monitoring and adult intervention; and perhaps even more importantly, *free to* think his own thoughts, *to* choose his own activities and *to* associate (freely) with a very wide range of other children (and not just allegedly "bad" or "special" kids like himself).

The bullying I alluded to earlier was not much of a problem initially because there were two somewhat older boys in the school then who took it upon themselves to keep Jesse in check. This year has been a different story, however. Now Jesse is the oldest boy; and sure enough, he immediately set out in September to take full advantage of his physical supremacy by trying to lord it over some of the smaller kids—until recently, when a coalition of them banded together in a council meeting and figured out a way to bell the cat. The meeting had courageously been called by Zach, one of the next younger boys, who after grilling Jesse with a series of "Why do you always do this and why do you always do that?" questions, made a motion that Jesse would have to pay a five-dollar fine the next time he intimidated a smaller student. It passed with only one dissenting vote (guess whose), and needless to say there hasn't been a problem since. If anything, Jesse looks relieved.

Wilhelm Reich once said that a bent tree will never grow straight. Of course, Reich, as a depth psychologist, was using this metaphor to refer to human children in order to emphasize his belief in the importance of preventing damage to the psyche from occurring in the first place. And of course he is right, though it is no historical surprise that Reich's efforts to bring public policy with regard to child rearing and education in line with his model of healthy psychological functioning resulted in his being expelled from one European country after another in the 1920s and 30s. By the time Reich landed in this country, he had entirely abandoned the political process as a way of effecting social/psychological change and had returned, instead, to pouring his immense energy and genius into developing and teaching his own therapeutic model.

Today the picture is, if anything, only bleaker than it was in Reich's time. Jesse's story is now an all too common one. Due to a myriad of causes, our culture is busy producing entire forests of bent children just like him; and meanwhile, we continue to witness the failure of one socially engineered mass solution after another. Extending Reich's metaphor to meet our post-modern predicament, one in which our major cities have become dangerous places to live and their schools hostility-breeding holding pens, I believe we can help bent children to grow straight*er* —but only one at a time. Each case, in other words, represents a unique re-balancing act, depending on a plethora of individual factors. Boiler plate school reform initiatives and pilot projects only work for a brief time and only help a fortunate few, and that, I am afraid, is how it will always be.

And while bent trees never grow straight, they do compensate for adverse conditions in the most amazing ways, provided, of course, that they aren't stressed to the point of disease and ultimately death. The trees in my large, inner-city back yard are an excellent example. Shaded by much larger trees left to grow wild on an adjoining lot, mine have managed to reach the sunlight they need to survive by growing sideways at a rather steep angle for several years. In the meantime, we tended and mulched and fertilized them, so that today they are beautiful and healthy, if not a bit unusual looking. And so it is with children, who often possess unfathomable resilience and the ability to adapt—if they aren't pushed beyond human limits.

But then again, children are much more complex organisms than trees. In Jesse's case, did we expect to change him simply by blanketing him with love and understanding, freeing up enough open space for him to grow into, and looking the other way when he would choose to unload some of his pain on another, usually smaller child? Hardly, but on the other hand, we now know from long experience that stepping up the "discipline" and increasing the supervision and external motivation—the standard response of most schools to non-conforming students—is so often simply a set-up for some form of permanent failure, or at best, a way of disguising or delaying it.

No, the medicine we have been administering to Jesse might best be called what was popularly known for a time as "tough love." Or a much older name for the same thing (but which long ago passed out of vogue) would be this: the truth. When he acts like a moron, someone tells him—straight and to his face. And when he acts or thinks insightfully or courageously, the same is true. When his jokes really are funny, people laugh at them. And when his language or behavior exceed acceptable limits, someone—very often *not* me or one of the other teachers, as in the above example—stops him in his tracks. In short, if Jesse is not nice to others, then they are not all that likely to be nice to him. Or as the saying used to go, we are "real" with Jesse, and he knows it. Perhaps the greatest single tragedy of the modern centralized model of schooling is that it has given rise to a set of sterile, competitive micro-environments where no one is ever real with anyone. All in the name of preparing children one day to "face the real world."

We soon began seeing sometimes dramatic improvements in Jesse's overall attitude and demeanor, but I can't exactly make the same claims about his academic prowess. Though his ability to stay with activities that interested him (gymnastics and the computer being his favorites) increased steadily over time, his resistance to any kind of organized academic study remained massive as he launched into his second half-year with us. He would occasionally try to join in on a class in history, or science, or math or whatever, but always with the same result: he would quickly lose interest and then resort to his old dysfunctional, attention-grabbing behaviors, which would earn him the same negative reward: the teacher would send him packing. The only difference here between us and most other schools is that we don't attach any additional meaning to this outcome. Where Jesse goes after he's been asked to leave a class is his business (there's no principal's office anyhow), and he's always welcome to come back as soon as he's ready to make the same commitment to the class as the others. In other words, attending classes in our unusual (by current standards) school is not compulsory; it is a personal choice and a privilege of sorts.

Meanwhile, the game clock continues to run on the (very unlevel) playing field of academic performance, and the gap between Jesse and that mythical statistical monster—the median child in his age group—continues to widen. Here is where the second ingredient in our prescription enters into the story. It, too, is a remedy as old as the hills. We simply call it apprenticeship, or internship; and it is a particularly effective way to help bring around young adolescent children with a poor track record in conventional schooling.

Over the years, we have gradually learned the importance of getting all kids Jesse's age, and of all abilities, involved in the outside adult world in ways of their own choosing. John Taylor Gatto, author of *Dumbing Us Down: the Hidden Curriculum of the Public Schools,* developed this educational practice into an art form during his twenty-six years of teaching in the New York City public school system. One of John's goals as a teacher when working with middle school-age kids was eventually to find himself sitting alone in an empty classroom while his students—all children of the underclass—were spread out across the metropolis investigating the endless possibilities which abound in the urban adult world.

The beauty of the apprenticeship model is that it kills so many birds with one stone. For starters, it gives kids the message that the adult world is worth learning about; and then it provides the perfect environment for that learning: the workplace. It also supplies the framework within which a relationship—one which is mutually beneficial on many levels—can develop between mentor and apprentice; and finally, it gives the student a respite from the constant supervision and performance monitoring upon which most schools depend so heavily, giving them the perfect way to communicate to their students: we recognize that you are grown up enough now to work and learn independently and derive your own value from your own experience. Additionally, of course, apprenticeships give kids a chance to explore future career possibilities with great immediacy, and often lead, either directly or indirectly, to both current and future job opportunities.

Enter Frank Houde. Frank is a sixty-year-old craftsman who co-owns a small, independent woodworking shop which specializes in traditional wooden boats and cars. Father of five sons (and also grandfather of five), Frank and his shop were Jesse's first choice when I asked him in September what he'd like to try out for an apprenticeship this year (he declined to do one last spring when he first came to us, which was fine). Since Frank's shop is on the same street as the school, Jesse and Frank already had a passing acquaintance, and I suspect that Jesse was at least as drawn, if not more, to the person of Frank as he was to the kind of work that Frank does. This brings to mind perhaps the single most valuable dimension of the mentor/apprentice exchange, which is that it restores learning to where it most rightfully belongs, embedded in the relationship between two people. And so, all this past fall Jesse has been spending one morning a week with Frank in his shop. Until recently he has mainly been watching and helping Frank while he works, as well as doing the chores that all apprentices in woodshops do, sweeping, fetching and putting away tools, carrying firewood and whatnot.

Enter the final prop in this vignette—Jesse's school desk. The desks in our school just so happen to be as motley an assortment as the kids who use them. They are all hand-me-downs from inner-city public schools which closed their doors to children long ago, and they span several generations of design style, from old oak ones with beautiful bent-wood braces to the more modern formica models with legs of tubular steel. Jesse, of course, had managed to lay claim to one of the nicer, older ones; though as I have already hinted, it didn't get the kind of use that people usually associate with school desks. Jesse's was more like a night stand, or a coffee table perhaps, a place to stack things carelessly—tape players and tapes, portable video games, sweaters, coats, hats, gloves... And on the rare occasions when the top happened to be uncluttered, it served as a decreasingly sturdy, elevated seat.

Over the years I have observed something about schoolbooks that I think applies equally well to Jesse's desk. Take math workbooks, for instance. Typically, I can tell when a child is having difficulty with arithmetic, or just plain doesn't like it, by the appearance (or disappearance) of his or her book. If he or she does manage to hang onto it, it quickly begins to look like something that got stuck in a department store escalator, with the cover all smudged and rumpled and dog-eared, and several pages half torn out. Since Jesse had yet to choose to have any books of his own, it was his desk that became the concrete symbol of his years of frustration and failure in school, and the recipient thereof. He carved it, he scribbled on it, he rocked it, he kicked it, he knocked it over; until finally one day when he sat on it with a little too much gusto and just like Humpty Dumpty, it fell into a heap of its composite pieces (with him on top).

And what did I do when I saw the mess? Did I scold him for destroying school property? Did I lecture him about the proper use of school desks? Actually, I laughed out loud, amused by the fact that in all my years of teaching, I had never before seen anyone manage to reduce his desk to rubble. Then, remembering that he had an apprenticeship in a woodshop, I asked him if he would be willing to get Frank to help him restore the desk there. Jesse thought for a moment or two and said that he would ask Frank at their next session.

Jesse's relationship with Frank (and vice versa) had already been coming along quite nicely, and the timing of Jesse having a project of his own to work on couldn't have been better. I say this because every so often we like to hold what we call an "apprenticeship night" at the school, in order for the young apprentices to have a chance to show off their accomplishments to their own and other school parents. The next scheduled one was only a couple of weeks away, and I could tell Jesse was a bit daunted by the whole idea. So, it seemed to me it might help if he had a specific goal in his sights.

It would be lovely at this point to present a tidy and orderly picture of Jesse's progress in his apprenticeship. The trouble is that learning, growth and change—anybody's—simply don't happen that way. They occur in fits and starts, the result of a constant interplay between the forces of outward momentum and inward inertia. With a certain amount of hesitation, Jesse did set himself to the task of reconstituting his desk, aided by Frank's instruction and assistance. And suddenly there existed a reality where "adult supervision and assessment"—dirty words in an earlier paragraph—were both essential to and welcomed by even the most resistant "student."

Again, the beauty of the apprentice model is that it allows for so many kinds of learning on so many different levels. To illustrate this crucial point, here are the following excerpts from the journal I asked Frank to keep about his time spent with Jesse:

> —Jesse wants to be in the shop with us. He's interested enough to watch while I work. Every chance I get I teach names of tools, measuring, design and layout, business and

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so on. Whatever is up is what is being taught. The tests are: "Jesse, please bring me the sliding square," or "Measure the length and width of that board for me."

—He's willing to write! Does a better than average job with his journal. That's a hopeful sign in a lad who's been branded a school failure. I've told him daily journaling is a requirement of this apprenticeship; and he not only does it, I think he's actually in accord with it.

—Jesse says he's terrible at math. As we work with measurement, design and layout I find that, yes, he's lacking. His basic skills are sound, though, and little by little he lets on that he knows more than he was willing to show initially. There's skill there for the developing, when he wants it.

—Jesse's school desk is broken (later I learn he tore it apart himself) and he asks if he can bring it to the shop and fix it. Sounds like a good project to me; but my work time is precious, so I ask if we can work on it during lunch hours. He agrees happily and brings in a sad pile of desk parts.

—I told Jesse to come in for his regular apprentice time and then at noon we will grab a quick bite and work on the desk. He doesn't show at the appointed time and I assume he's out of school. So, I make an appointment with a customer for noon; and then, just as I'm going out the door, Jesse shows. I can't change things again so tell him we'll do it Thursday and make sure he understands the timing. I can see he's disappointed. There seems to be some mistrust there too.

—Thursday, Jesse shows on schedule and helps with work on a wooden car body. At noon we rush next door, grab a bite and back to the shop. We start taking the remainder of the desk apart and cleaning the joints for regluing. I'm teaching as we work and Jesse, motivation high, is chugging right along with his work. At one point he remarks on a loose leg joint and asks how to fix it. I tell him that the only way that really works well is to take it apart, clean it and reglue it. I say

> that this particular joint will be OK when the rest of the bench is assembled around it, though, so don't bother. But he is curious about how one takes apart such a joint and we discuss it some, then I get distracted by a phone call. A couple of minutes later Jesse says, "Shit!" He has broken the joint while trying to get it apart. Didn't want any half-measures in rehabbing his desk. I'm annoyed at him and he hears it in my voice. Then I say, "It's OK, Jess. It can be fixed." So we discuss how to heal the break. Ten minutes later I see him holding the offending part and muttering with a dark look on his face. I ask, "Mad at yourself, Jesse?" He admits it and then I tell him, "Hey, what we've done here is create an opportunity to learn!" I go on to tell him how many times in my life I've created similar opportunities for myself. He gets it and starts to smile. I am reminded why I take on an apprentice every now and then.
>
> Apprentice Night is coming up and Jesse seems in a quandary about what to do. I don't think the desk will be finished by then. I get the feeling that this is a familiar scenario for him. Another incompletion. Another failure to finish. I say, "Lets get some photos of the pieces and what you're doing to them. I think those, along with whatever you've got done on the desk and your journal will make a good exhibit. Again the smile and I sense relief... "I'm gonna finish this time!"
>
> We take the photos and glue up the desk. Tune in tomorrow...

The most essential quality that I find revealed in Frank's journal is the deepening, multi-level relationship between mentor and apprentice. Clearly, an alchemical reaction is slowly building between the two of them that would be much less likely ever to occur between teacher and student in a standard classroom, simply because of all of the "excess baggage" which that authority-bound dynamic tends to carry. I could tell that Jesse was sweating bullets over the apprenticeship night. As the time approached, he began presenting to me excuse after excuse for why he couldn't be there; and all I could do as his teacher was to set the limits for him, telling him that I would have his hide if he didn't show up. As Frank's journal tells us, it was he—as mentor—who was able to help Jesse through the barrier of his own fear.

Accompanied by Frank, Jesse not only made it to the apprenticeship night, he glowed as he showed off his half-completed desk and answered question after question about how on earth he was able to put that helter-skelter collection of parts shown in the photos back into such a strong and stable four-legged structure. And on that evening, Jesse declared his intention not only to reconstruct the desk to its original specifications, but to refinish it as well. It was then that I realized I couldn't wait to see him seated either at or on that freshly varnished, gleaming antique; because it would be at that moment that he would possess—perhaps for the first time in his young life—an entirely legitimate basis for lording something over his peers.

Along with that image came the thought: this young man, now thirteen, was not only learning how to repair broken furniture, he was taking all of the necessary steps for mending a damaged mind. And it escaped neither Frank nor me, nor should it escape anyone else, that the desk Jesse had chosen to invest so many hours of his young life in was not just any old desk. It was an old public school desk, one at which countless children Jesse's approximate age and size had sat over the years, and an older version of the ones which for him had been the loci of so much negativity throughout the most vulnerable period of his childhood.

I no longer believe in accidents. As the pioneering thanatologist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross discovered when she began working with the terminally ill in the 1950s, children lead lives rich in symbols, and their thinking—even their internal biochemistry—is guided by them. Jesse's mind had suffered real and significant damage while he sat defenseless at all of those public and parochial school desks; and then one day, there appeared an opportunity for him to accomplish long-overdue healing—especially on the level of symbol and metaphor—right at scene of the crime, so to speak. Says "cancer doctor" Bernie Siegel, a long-time student of Kübler-Ross, "Coincidence is just God's way of remaining anonymous."

In other words, if this were Jesse's dream, then the desk would represent his mind; and his discovery that he could take a jumbled pile of broken wooden parts and reassemble them into a new whole would signify his readiness to begin anew the task of his mental development. The dream would indicate to us that now that his heart and his image of himself are in large part restored, the ground has been prepared for the necessary work on his mind to follow naturally—without the continual strife which had accompanied his earlier schooling.

It seems I should leave this story unfinished, just as Jesse's school desk is yet to be completed; for even when its last coat of varnish is finally applied, the story in some ways will be only beginning. Jesse will continue to develop in fits and starts, just like the rest of us; and who is to say where it will all lead him? I don't think anyone can say; but I believe I can predict, with at least a fair measure of certainty, that with the successful completion of this single woodworking project, a crucial curve will have been negotiated in one troubled boy's life.

The key word here is *one*. This is the story of how one boy is finding his way through the labyrinth we call life, and how the outside world is providing him with certain needed cues at certain crucial moments. This is not the story of a model program or a successful pilot project. No grants were written; no press conferences were held and no statistical profiles were drawn up. Furthermore, the story has very little to do with anything the Free School did; but more has to do with what it didn't—the pivotal contribution having come instead from a man in the neighborhood all of whose credentials came from the school of life.

Thus the resolution to this particular plot is occurring not at the level of institution, but rather at the level of individual, family and community. Jesse was rescued from one of the multitude of cracks in the uncertain ground of compulsory public education by a mother determined to resume control over her son's destiny. She's now busy learning to cede that control to its rightful owner—Jesse—and we're all immensely grateful that the Free School could be there to help.

A child hits a child,
And we call it aggression,
A child hits an adult,
And we call it hostility.
An adult hits an adult,
And we call it assault and battery.
An adult hits a child,
And we call it discipline.

Contributed by Aurelia Webb, one of our subscribers.

REVIEW:

HOW LIKE AN ANGEL CAME I DOWN
Conversations with Children on the Gospels
by Bronson Alcott
Introduced and edited by Alice O. Howell
Lindisfarne Press, Hudson, NY, 1991. pb $16.95
Reviewed by Mary M. Leue

—a book all of us who work with children ought to read carefully and "visit" often. *—Robert Coles*

Here is one of these priceless, quiet books that we hold up and declare, "Every parent, every teacher, every lawmaker, should know this work!"

—Joseph Chilton Pearce

WONDER
by Thomas Traherne

How like an Angel came I down!
How bright are all things here!
When first among his Works I did appear
O how their Glory did me crown!
The World resembled his ETERNITIE,
In which my Soul did walk;
And ev'ry thing that I did see
Did with me talk.
The Skies in their Magnificence,
The lively lovely Air,
O how divine, how soft, how sweet, how fair!
The Stars did entertain my Sense;
And all the Works of God so bright and pure,
So rich and great, did seem,
And if they ever must endure In my Esteem.

A Nativ Health and Innocence
 Within my Bones did grow,
And while my God did all his Glories show
I felt a vigour in my Sense
That was all SPIRIT: I within did flow
With Seas of Life like Wine;
I nothing in the World did know
But 'twas Divine.

Well, I must confess: this review is being composed and written in a state of exultation which is probably not very conducive to objectivity. Even worse, I don't care! I'm in love with this book and I wish everybody would buy a copy, because it proclaims a truth about children that our society, let alone our school system, would leave entirely out of the equation if they could, because it's not an objectively provable equation! If we who work with children did so on the basis of this truth, our institutions would have to change drastically, and institutions don't operate that way—at least, not in America! Not yet, if ever.

So thank God, Robert Coles and Joe Pearce agree with me! I guess, in the world I *wish* were our shared reality, nobody would worry overmuch about being objective, because it wouldn't be necessary. Instead, we'd have common sense and good will to fall back on. Mark Twain is once said to have said, "Common sense is very uncommon." William James talks about the difference between *genuinely* being "in sync" with one's will—and making resolutions to do or stop doing something by "willing" to do it. The latter doesn't really work. Making real changes in one's way of doing things comes from a very different place, and more than not, works in the dark, only bursting forth full-blown, often to one's total surprise or even consternation! In other words, change is *alchemical*—it works on what Thomas Moore (or the Dalai Lama) would call the soul level.

Beginning with the Thomas Traherne poem (above) from which it derives its title, this marvelous book is about the nature of life at the soul level, as seen through the eyes of children from the ages of five through eleven gathered in a small Boston school with two teachers in it which operated between the years 1835 and 1837. It's not really a book to be read straight through—at least, not for me. Like Coles, I receive it as a "place" I love to visit. Let me tell you about that "place."

The school was housed in the upper floor of a large stone building owned by the Masonic Order located in downtown Boston on a street named "Temple Street"—and so, the school was given the name, "The Temple School." A Miss Elizabeth Peabody, unmarried member of a distinguished Boston family, who had just opened a small school of her own, had become deeply impressed by Alcott as a teacher and offered to join forces with him in this new school, in which she would function as his assistant and later, recorder of his conversations with the children.

The cultural milieu for the school was the period in New England called by Van Wyck Brooks, "The Flowering of New England"—the 1830s; a time when such Transcendentalist luminaries as Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, William Ellery Channing and Herman Melville were New England's leading writers and thinkers.

Influenced by people in England like the poets Wordsworth and Coleridge, these people were deeply imbued by a shared sense of the spiritual nature of human life. Brooks tells a lovely story about Margaret Fuller, one of their more flamboyant members, giving a lecture in England attended by the great Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle. She flings her arms wide, crying out in ecstasy, "I accept the universe!" "'Gad, she'd better!' muttered crusty old Thomas Carlyle."

Bronson Alcott was another such person, a man deeply in love with and totally dedicated to the spiritual throughout his life, despite being dogged by great poverty and a number of "failures," as measured by the world, from the beginning to the end of it! Louisa May Alcott's story, *Little Women*, is his daughter's unalloyed tribute to her father's influence on her own values! Poor as they always were, his wife and four daughters never once reproached or resented his saintly but totally impractical path!

The Temple School survived for less than three years, but its short span was an educationally brilliant one. A gentle man who genuinely loved children—and perhaps even more tellingly, respected them!—in addition to offering his pupils their ordinary school subjects, he conducted conversations with them twice a week based on a reading and then discussion of the Gospels, during which occasions he would ask them questions which enabled them to look deeply into their own psyches and bring out answers which represented their most earnest and heart-felt beliefs. These sessions were faithfully recorded by Miss Peabody.

This creative idyll came to an end largely as a result of the bad publicity engendered by the publication of Elizabeth Peabody's *Record of a School*, and Alcott's *Conversations with Children on the Gospels*. These verbatim accounts of what Alcott had been doing with his children were denounced from Boston's pulpits as obscene corruption of the "purity" of children—particularly of female children in "mixed" company—and focused on Alcott's (very delicate) discussion of the nature of birth on one occasion, and a comment made by young (five years old) Josiah Quincy on the body's coming into incarnation "through the naughtiness of other people."

The school was forcibly closed in a storm of bitter controversy and condemnation by these Puritannical Bostonians over the willingness of Alcott and Peabody to encourage freedom of thought and expression in children in a period when children were taught entirely by rote in other schools, who were supposed to be "seen but not heard"—and for the unorthodoxy of the views expressed by the children themselves.

Almost all the copies of these volumes that had not been destroyed ended up being sold by the publisher as paper to line trunks with! We are fortunate that a few copies survived.

THE CONVERSATIONS

MR. ALCOTT'S SCHOOL-ROOM
(Courtesy of the Concord Free Public Library)

The foreword by Stephen Mitchell to Mrs. Howell's edition records a selection made from these conversations which conveys their gist. I reproduce it here because it gives such a vivid picture of Alcott's gentle method and of the astounding profundity of his pupils:

> There are many things to admire in this fascinating book, and I am grateful to Mrs. Howell for rescuing it from oblivion. Who would have thought that we already had, as part of our American heritage, such a practical demonstration of

Jesus' advice to become like little children? The book might be sub-subtitled "News from the Kingdom of Heaven."

Mr. Alcott. Now, does your spirit differ in any sense from God's spirit? Each may answer.

Charles. (10-12 years old). God made our spirits.

Mr. Alcott. They differ from His then in being derived?

George K. (7-10). They are not so good.

William B. (10-12). They have not so much power.

Augustine (7-10). I don't think our spirit does differ much.

Charles. God is spirit, we are spirit and body.

Josiah (5 years old). He differs from us, as a king's body differs from ours. A king's body is arrayed with more goodness than ours.

Edward B. (10-12) God's spirit is a million times larger than ours, and comes out of him as the drops of the ocean.

Mr. Alcott. Jesus said he was the son—the child of God. Are we also God's sons?

William B. Oh! before I was born—I think I was a part of God himself.

Many Others. So do I.

Mr. Alcott Who thinks his own spirit is the child of God? (All held up hands). Now, is God your Father in the same sense that he is the Father of Jesus? (Most held up hands).

Mr. Alcott. Does Father and Son mean God and Jesus?

Charles. No; it means God and any man.

Mr. Alcott. Do you think that were you to use all that is in your spirit, you might also be prophets?

Several. If we had faith enough.

William B. If we had love enough.

Charles. A prophet first has a little love, and that gives the impulse to more, and so on, until he becomes so full of love, he knows everything.

Mr. Alcott. Why did the angel say to Mary, 'The Lord is with thee'?

George K. I don't know. The Lord is always with us.

Arnold (?). The Lord is with us when we are good.

Augustine. The Lord is with us when we are bad, or we could not live.

Ellen (10-12). [mentions Judgment Day]

Mr. Alcott. What do you mean by Judgment Day?

Ellen. The last day, the day when the world is to be destroyed.

Charles. The day of Judgment is not any more at the end of the world than now. It is the Judgment of conscience at every moment.

Mr. Alcott Where did Jesus get his knowledge?

Martha (7-10) He went into his own soul.

Augustine. Heaven is in our spirits—in God. It is in no particular place. It is not material. It is wherever people are good.

Charles. Heaven is everywhere—Eternity. It stops where there is anything bad. It means peace and love. High and white are emblems of it.

Andrew (7-10). Heaven is like a cloud, and God and Jesus and the angels sit on it.

Mr. Alcott Where is it?

Andrew. Everywhere. Every person that is good, God looks at and takes care of.

Frederic (10-12). Wherever there is good.

Samuel R. (10-12) But in no place.

Franklin (10-12). Heaven is the spirit's truth and goodness. It is in everybody; but mostly in the good.

Mr. Alcott. Can you say to yourself, I can remove this mountain?

[Now comes an astonishing rhapsody by the five-year-old Josiah Quincy.]

Josiah (bursts out) Yes, Mr. Alcott! I do not mean that with my body I can lift up a mountain—with my hand; but I can feel; and I know that my conscience is greater than the mountain, for it can feel and do; and the mountain cannot. There is the mountain, there! It was made, and that is all. But my conscience can grow. It is the same kind of spirit as made the mountain be, in the first place. I do not know what it may be and do. The body is a mountain, and the spirit says, be moved, it is moved into another place. Mr. Alcott, we think too much about clay. We should think of spirit. I think we should love spirit, not clay. I should think a mother now would love her baby's spirit; and suppose it should die, that is only the spirit bursting away out of the body. It is alive; it is perfectly happy; I really do not know why people mourn when their friends die. I should think it would be a matter of rejoicing. For instance, now, if we should go into the street and find a box, an old dusty box, and should put into it some very fine pearls, and bye and bye the box should grow old and break, why, we should not even *think about the box; but if the pearls were safe, we should think of them and nothing else. So it is with the soul and body. I cannot see why people mourn for bodies.*

Mr. Alcott. Yes, Josiah; that is all true, and we are glad to hear it. Shall someone else now speak beside you?

[But Josiah's eloquence is like a mighty river; its momentum is such that he can barely restrain himself, and he is quiet only on condition.]

Josiah. Oh, Mr. Alcott! then I will stay in at recess and talk.

How interesting it would have been to stay in during that recess and listen to this five-year-old. (The great ninth-century Zen Master Chao-chou said, "If I meet a hundred-year-old man and I have something to teach him, I will teach; if I meet an eight-year-old boy and he has something to teach me, I will learn.")

It comes as no surprise when, at the end of one class, a student says to Alcott, "Every lesson is more interesting than the last!" Nor are we surprised at the following short exchange, which could serve as the epigraph for this book:

Mr. Alcott. Do you think these conversations are of any use to you?
Charles. Yes; they teach us a great deal.
Mr. Alcott. What do they teach you?
George K. To know ourselves.

Alice Howell's editorial commentary at the end of the book on the nature of true teaching is of equal value here. I reproduce a little of it:

> ...e-ducation (ē-ducere) means drawing forth what is already within. This Alcott did supremely well. He listened. And by judicious questioning, he provided what I have

called in my other books "occasions for attacks of insight"—those "Aha! I get it!" outbursts which are the teacher's delight.

Setting aside a few minutes in every class for a mini-conversation pays off. It establishes trust and mutual respect. Like the eye of a camera, the lens of the psyche opens wider, so that more information can subsequently flow in. Having attended so many schools in several different countries in my own childhood, I learned quickly to "psych" out my teachers and noticed what made some of them good and some even bad at teaching. You can also slam the door in a child's mind. I learned that fear closes the lens of learning. Fear of punishment, fear of mistakes, fear of ridicule, fear of criticism and rejection. There was no fear in Mr. Alcott's schoolroom, and I hope there was none in mine.

My good teachers, and I had three, all had two things in common: they loved what they were doing, and they made learning exciting. Over the years I have been privileged to observe several colleagues who had the same gifts, and I have read of many others. It is evident from Miss Peabody's records that the children greatly enjoyed the Conversations.

Why are these conversations interesting? said Mr. Alcott. Because they give us new ideas, said a boy. Many others said they liked them for the same reason. Mr. Alcott then said, conversations are the most perfect transcript of the mind. Could all the conversations of great minds be recorded, it would give us a better idea of them than the history of their lives. Why is the New Testament so interesting? Because it is full of the conversations of Jesus. Conversations of Socrates make the next most interesting book. Conversation is full of life. The spirit's workings come out in conversations, fresh and vivid. Why, if I thought I only gave you knowledge and could not lead you to use it to make yourselves better, I would never enter this schoolroom again !

Two of Miss Peabody's recorded remarks by children, as quoted by Alice Howell, are especially delightful to me. One of them is an outburst by a five-year-old (surely, it must have been Josiah!),

Oh, Mr. Alcott, I never even knew I had a mind until I came to this school!

The other is an answer given by Charles Morgan, whose father was a whale oil merchant, to the question of what he thinks his mission in incarnating in this life might be,

I think the mission of my soul is to sell oil.

And finally, I would like to reproduce (on the following page) Wordsworth's poem (also cited by Mrs. Howell) on birth and early childhood which has long been a favorite of mine, containing as it does a level of truth about the birth of children which we seem to have forgotten in our modern world. Like Alcott, like Alice Howell, I have found great innate spiritual beauty and profound wisdom within the beings of the children I have taught, and have always considered it my task to celebrate that inner beauty.

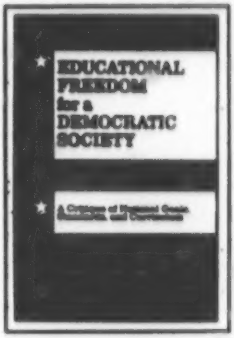
ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

by William Wordsworth

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
  Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his Joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

A BOLD RESPONSE TO "GOALS 2000"
AND THE NATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION



The recent movement for national educational goals and standards represents a massive shift of educational authority from families and local communities to federal and state bureaucracies. Seeing children as "intellectual capital" in the national economy, this movement threatens educational freedom and democratic community life in America.

Educational Freedom for a Democratic Society offers sixteen critical perspectives on the national standards movement by major scholars in progressive and holistic education and leading homeschooling advocates. The book is edited by Ron Miller, the founding editor of *Holistic Education Review*, who has also written three important chapters.

To order *Educational Freedom for a Democratic Society* and receive a free copy of our catalog Great Ideas in Education—featuring over 75 other books and videos on democratic, person-centered education, write or call The Resource Center for Redesigning Education, P.O. Box 298, Brandon, Vermont 05733 • 1-800-639-4122

BERKSHIRE LIVE-OUT:

Well, we're definitely going to be there again for a week next summer, starting on the last week in July, same time, same station! I sure hope you don't have to miss it this time! It's so special. I will send out a notice giving directions, specific days, people who will be coming to make presentations during the week, so do plan to come! It still costs only $5 a day per adult or child over six and you have your choice of sleeping in the farmhouse or setting up camp in the orchard, eating separately or family style with the gang. You can bring food to share or eat ours for an additional $1 per day per person, kids under six half price. If you already know you can come, fill out the coupon below or call us at (518) 432-1578. But even if you can't plan this far ahead, just remember there's plenty of space, and the length of time you choose to stay is your own. I'll put another coupon in the second notice when I send it out.

Here is your coupon, and in the following pages are several accounts of last summer's gathering to whet your appetite:

☐ Yes! I'm coming to the Live-out this summer!
☐ I (we) are staying for ___ days.
☐ I (we) probably won't be able to let you know beforehand, but we're coming!!
☐ I can't afford your fees but I still want to come, and I'll tell you how much I can manage, or haggle with you or barter or something.
☐ I (we) don't know how many days we'll be staying, but we'll let you know after we find out who's coming or when we know our own schedule ☐ I (we)'ll be camping in the orchard ☐ I (we)'ll be eating in our tent ☐ I (we)'ll want __ place(s) in the house to sleep ☐ I (we)'ll pay for our food and eat with you all ☐ I (we)'ll bring food to share.
I'm bringing:
☐ Myself ☐ food to share ☐ Second adult or kid over six ☐ Kid under six ☐ Third adult or kid over six ☐ Second kid under six

Nancy Ost:

Another glorious week spent in the Berkshires with scrumptious food, a warm and welcoming environment, and stimulating, thought-provoking conversation—what better way to spend the last week in July when temperatures in the cities were reported to be approaching 100! I come back each year, it's been three now, because I know I am always going to go away nurtured by the environs and the people. The first year the "big guns" like John Gatto filled my head with so much to think about that I am still being stimulated by the ideas that were put out there.

As I try to sort out the different conversations from the first two years, I find my memory unable to do anything but have a vision of a house buzzing with intimate conversations here and there, gang gatherings at other times in which everyone was sharing ideas and experiences, all of us providing support for each other so we could continue to go out and "walk our talk", as the Native American expression goes. What could be better than a group of people together who all believe that the children of the world deserve to be respected as individuals and that they have a right to learn as individuals!

This year I was particularly impressed that so many young people came to the Live-Out, young from my perspective of having just turned 50. I find it very heartening that there are men and women in college and just out of college who sense that there is something wrong with the educational system and who are seeking other avenues in which to teach. And thank you, Helene Leue, for your presentation on how you are home-schooling your two kids, Ian and Madeline. Helene is fortunate enough to have her job as a home child-care worker enable her to be at home much of the time. It was enlightening to hear how she weaves her job and her husband, Mark's, work as a luthier [a builder of stringed musical instruments] into the lives of their children and their education. Where there's a will, there's a way!

And I certainly can't leave out the presence of Jerry Mintz and his wonderful way of teaching through the game of ping-pong. Jerry, you provide us all with an immediate way to get comfortable with each other, as we watch and kibbitz over the fine art of smashing that little white ball off the hand-made, not-quite-regulation, plywood table on the front lawn.

So once again, Mary, thanks for providing us with this special time every year and this special home of yours in which we can gather to both retreat and to learn. I believe we really are making a change, just as it needs to be, from the bottom up.

BERKSHIRE-LIVE OUT PING PONG

by Betsy Mercogliano

Ping.
The hermit thrush awakens the woods
With lilt so alluring, all other beings hush to hear.
The call drifts down from somewhere above,
Notes that seem to speak from the nymphs and devas
Of each leaf and tree,
Yet truly dance from the little throat with a big voice of joy.

Pong.
Grunts pour out of this high school champ,
Pushing retirement, but playing for keeps.
The old slam comes back to that arm,
Coaxed by an eleven-year-old challenge,
The give and take of each move
Bringing the distance between them closer and closer.
The challenger grows with each serve,
The champ loosens with each smash,
'Til young and old don't mean a thing
At this feast-table of fun.

Ping.
I sit quietly and write these lines,
The sun sultry above,
Warming my body 'til rivulets of sweat run down my pits,
Pooling at my belly and hips.
This sanctuary of old tree souls,
With breezes that bless like prayers,
Brings me home within to the juice
Of friends, food, frolic and future,
Just by being here, holding me in the peace
Of earth, air, fire and water
That has lived here since the time before.
Pong.
Crickets rub in tune to the setting sun,
The prelude to the evening's virtuoso soloist,
A calming drone that settles as the sky deepens into rose
    hues.
Then the joy bird soothes the edges of day,
Touching tones that tease out the last lyrics of light,
Sending us to sleep with the echo of pure beauty
As each note sings to our whole beings
And reminds us of the essence which is here all around
    and within.

Connie Frisbee Houde:

I have attended parts of the live-out for the last three years. I always enjoy the inspirational atmosphere and the camaraderie of the many different people that come through the farm with their different projects and approaches to education. It was reassuring to me to see the little pockets in various different towns and cities where individuals are making a difference in the lives of our young people. The spontaneous discussions that developed as we watched a Ping-Pong game or gathered around a wonderful meal were as powerful as the presentations. There was a sense of community that developed including people who have spent the whole week and those like me who were only able to attend one day.

The most powerful part for me was the slide presentation given by Daniel Brown about the five-day interfaith Peace Convocation that was held in Oswiecim, Poland last December that Mary Leue, Larry and Ellen Becker, their two children and Judith Rubenstein, another member of the community, attended. This Convocation launched an Interfaith Pilgrimage for Peace and Life from Auschwitz to Hiroshima. Daniel shared not only the photographs but how he involved his whole class in the journey he was taking. His students wrote very moving letters that he took with him and left at Auschwitz. It was a powerful way to share the reality of history with a group of students and a great example of how those students were able to "travel" to Poland with him.

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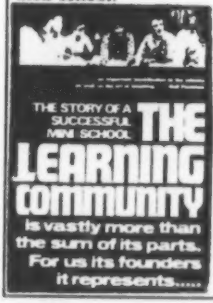
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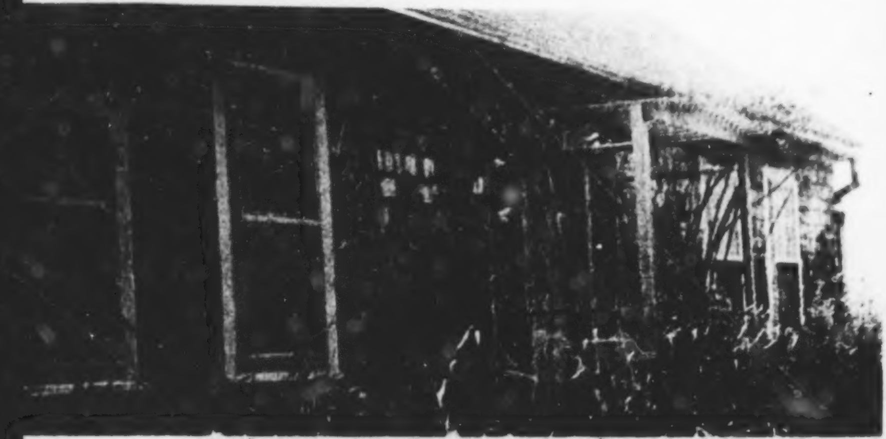
Here follows a picture album taken mostly from last summer but also including pictures from earlier years not previously included in ΣΚΟΛΕ. It was great fun, as you can see from the pics. Do join us next summer!



Two views of the farmhouse, front ⬆ and back ⬇

Above, picking raspberries—below, camping in the orchard

Above, kitchen seminar—below, Ping pong seminar

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Children's community: above,hide-and-seek; below, eating and watching

Presenters: above, Mohammad; below, Chris

Stoop conclave

Berkshire Live-out

Summer 1995

Children's community

ΣΚΟΛΕ

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ΣΚΟΛΕ

the Journal of Alternative Education

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

I really love this issue! For one thing, it contains our very first interview with a distinguished professor from Cornell whom I've admired from afar for many years. I won't tell you all about him here, because it's repeated in the intro to the lead article, and besides, Urie can and does speak very eloquently for himself! We're on the trail of Dr. Robert Coles of Harvard, "the other" real academic advocate *for* and lover *of* children, for a future issue, perhaps the winter one. (I don't count John Gatto and Marion Wright Edelman here in this exclusive category, magnificent human beings that they also are, because they're not classical academics. They both fry other fish, no less crucially, however! We'll try for Edelman somewhere down the line)

For another, the issue also contains articles by many, perhaps most, of my very favorite contributors, including John Taylor Gatto Himself, John Potter, Sandy Hurst, Emanuel Pariser, Jerry Mintz, Ron Miller, Robert Kastelic, Bill Kaul and Pat Farenga, plus a new one, Michael Massurin, as well as our own home-grown pundits Nancy Ost, and, last but not least, our indomitable couple, Betsy Mercogliano and Chris Mercogliano, each in her/his own write!

Chris attended the Children's Defense Fund March in Washington with a bunch of kids recently, and has promised to write us a full report for the Fall issue. He says it was totally awesome, on the scale of the King march! And oh, please, principals, teachers, parents, please tell your kids to let us publish them in that same fall issue. My own grandkids love to do that! My screen name is MarySKOLE@AOL.com. I'll send them a copy for their files! And if I forget or get too busy, remind them they (and you!) can

BUG ME BUG ME BUG ME

as John Potter (the *other* one, who is Head of the New School of Northern Virginia) has forgotten he once advised me to do! But then, he's no exception. For some weird reason a lot of members (more than 20 at last count) of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools no longer find *ΣΚΟΛΕ* to be of value as a supportive resource. Dunno why, and they don't say.

Professor Urie Bronfenbrenner, Jacob Gould Schumann Professor Emeritus of Human Development and Family Studies at Cornell University, is one of America's most distinguished social scientists. He is an expert on developmental psychology, childrearing and the ecology of human development. A founder and designer of the national Head Start program, Dr. Bronfenbrenner is internationally renowned for his cross-cultural studies and is a recipient of honorary degrees both in this country and abroad. His theoretical contributions and his ability to translate them into rigorous operational research models and effective social policies spurred the creation of Head Start and furthered the goals of Cornell's Life Course Institute, which has been re-named in his honor. Dr. Bronfenbrenner is the author, co-author or editor of thirteen books and more than three hundred articles, most notably, **Two Worlds of Childhood: U.S. and U.S.S.R.** *and* **The Ecology of Human Development.** *We were greatly honored at being given the privilege of interviewing Dr. Bronfenbrenner (who insisted that we call him Urie!).*

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR URIE BRONFENBRENNER

by Chris Mercogliano and Mary Leue

Mary. Urie, I remember that in the late 50's, during the Cold War, you and some other people started a very interesting Round Robin kind of thing that you called Committees of Correspondence, patterned after the exchanges of ideas among intellectual leaders before the American Revolution. I remember reading an article by you at the time about your experiences in Russia, and your description of the Russian schools, comparing them with American schools. The thing that struck me the most was your statement that in the Russian schools the older kids helped the younger ones, not this total age segregation, suggesting to me a much less formalized system.

Urie. Well, the less formalized system aspect isn't quite correct. in the sense that the classrooms were all part of what we would call the Boy Scouts movement or the Cub Scouts. The party was there but there was an informal concern by older kids for younger kids, which was part of Russian culture.

M. The other thing I remember was your saying that in those days you had to have a guide, and you remember standing on a street corner and the guide was saying proudly that there were no horse-drawn vehicles anymore in Moscow, and at that moment one was going by. Then your comment, as I remember, was that the Russians were less pragmatic than Americans.

U. (laughing) I am sure it happened. The interesting thing about it, I think, is that we are having it now in our country, where you say things that are not true, but at the moment you perceive them to be true, because it is so necessary to perceive it as true that you dare not allow your own self to recognize that it isn't true. We have become concerned with political correctness. To be sure the penalties in the Russian situation were much greater because they got to your family.

M. In your article challenging "the deficit model of the family," you said that you were optimistic, because we Americans are individualistic, and we are pragmatic.

U. Yes, but that article was written some time ago. I think we are losing the pragmatism and we have become now so individualistic that all we care about is our own particular self-group. You know the left only believes in the left and the right only believes only in the right and the fact that we are the United States of America it is just receding into the background and we are bringing up our children in that model. So it is, you no longer celebrate the holidays; nobody knows when Lincoln's birthday is any more and so we are split. And that is the whole antithesis of pragmatism, which is what made us great.

M. What kinds of things do you think have led us to this state?

U. That's of course a complicated question. It has many different sources depending on how far back you want to go. As you may know, at the present time our economic factors that are pushing us in that direction and dividing us and separating the rich from the poor. I am sure you are aware that among the so-called developed countries, we have more families with young children living in poverty than they have in other countries. We also have the biggest spread in family income. In other words, the difference between the rich and the poor is bigger in the United States than it is in any other country now. So that is the economic factor. But back in the 60's our economy was growing very fast, but nevertheless during that time single-parent families were increasing as they are just now, so it is not just economic. It is the breakup of the families, the break up of the communities, the break up of the neighborhoods, it is all the things that used to hold us together that are now splitting apart.

And the result of that is that we no longer our brother's keeper.
Chris. I think it was 1988 that you wrote this article in which you talk about the deficit model for American families and children. In that article, you gave some cross-cultural comparisons, and you pointed out that above all it was Anglo-Saxon countries, such as US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

U. And that is still true. We have now the figures for 1994 and we are farther out than ever.

C. In other words the data clearly points out that there is a cultural root to this.

U. You put your finger on it. Culture is at the root of what we are doing. I would say it is an anti-family culture in the first instance, which is the most destructive because that is where human beings are made into human beings, but it is also true for everything else. Our neighborhood commitments are gone. I grew up in rural America and if anyone got sick you were overwhelmed. Now you can die in your house and nobody knows it.

C. So, cultural speaking, getting back to the roots of this thing, this disease, this functional notion about human beings, where do you see that coming from?

U. You may have read an article in which I talk about that remarkable Frenchman de Tocqueville. He said this is the most individualistic nation in the world, and also the most cooperative, the most neighborly nation in the world. And he said, "And the danger will be if we ever let one of those override the other."

M. He also said that literacy was so high.

U. Yes, isn't that remarkable? And it was.

M. It amazed him.

U. You may have remembered that wonderful series on the Civil War that was on public television. One of his researchers made the comment then that never was the rate of literacy higher in the United States than at the time of the Civil War. That is what accounted for those marvelous letters that they were able to read from soldiers that were really literature.

M. How do you account for the decline in literacy? What do you see as the primary causes?

U. We really don't understand them all, because they are complicated and they are also reinforce each other, but certainly some of them are the decline in the premise of reading as an experience that you saw and learned in the family before you ever went to school. And where people read to you and you read to them and then, by the time you got into school reading was something that everybody did. And you saw your parents read and everybody knew the Bible. About fifteen years ago I was teaching one of these very large courses and I suddenly realized that when I quoted from the Bible, no one recognized the quotation. I still remember I was talking about some situation in which there had been a horrible event in the lives of people and, because of violence and so on and I heard myself saying," the wages of sin is death." I said. I realized I drew blank faces. And I said, "Does anybody know what I am saying? Does anybody understand, does anybody have a question?" A young women student raised her hand and said, "Should it be 'are'?"

M. (laughing) "Are," exactly! They didn't get the quote.

U. It didn't mean anything to them.

M. I have heard it said that if we taught walking the way we try to teach reading everybody would be in wheelchairs.

U. (laughing) You are absolutely right, because we are really very well geared biologically to read and we are very well geared to walk. All of those things we learn very early. You know the whole business—if you try to learn a language after you are going to school to learn it, it is very, very difficult, while it's a piece of cake if you grew up with it.

So what we see here in relation to the literacy business is that books were going out of the picture except in families where they still keep that tradition going. I remember calling attention to the fact that this phenomenon which was very, very common and now I don't think is so common and that is, kids reading in bed in with a flashlight under the covers. And being disciplined by their parents for doing it, so it was an addiction to reading.

C. My daughters do it, just so you know it.

U. Good for you, good for you.

C. It hasn't died completely.

U. And of course, once you get hooked, then you've got it forever. So, the roots are early, but the other thing of course that is killing reading is faxes and imagery and all of that stuff that we get so that nobody writes letters any more, nobody communicates any more, they just send these fax messages, which are illiterate and just convey in the fewest possible number of words something that isn't very clear. So reading has lost its function because you don't use it because you don't get messages that can be read, rather they are like telegraphs.

M. Well, that doesn't entirely account for the illiteracy rate among poor black kids from the inner city. A fellow we know in the Alternative Education business wrote a book called, *I Won't Learn From You* about his experiences with these kids.

Urie

I am not disputing what you're saying, but I am wondering how much of it also comes from the hidden racism and class prejudice that we don't...

U. Well, certainly when you speak about blacks it is. This is the shame of the nation. There is just no doubt that what has happened is that they have never really been treated like first class citizens and the result is that the schools were much poorer, the schools are still poorer because we always seem to fall back into a kind of segregation which is self-imposed and self-administered. You go into a school and the black kids are over here and the white kids over there, and we now have also a situation which I think is a very complicated one, which is on the one hand the notion that we should learn, you should be able to go to school and learn in your own language, but at the same time you don't learn the language, which you need in order to get a job.

So we are full of these contradictions in which we perpetuate these very things, then we blame the minority and say, "But what about the fact that the Vietnamese that come over here do so well and the Asians and so on." But the key to those situations is if you have a culture in which the spoken and written word is retarded as the cultural value, and you have been brought up in that ... I came to the United States not knowing a word of English; however my parents insisted on talking Russian. so that' s how I got my Russian, because you will learn English without trouble. And that was right. I learned English without any trouble, whereas I would never have been able to learn Russian. So what we need is a balanced situation in which you are not deprived in learning the language on the basis on which you get a job, while at the same time not being deprived of being able to learn and use your own language. Kids can learn more than one language, it's a piece of cake.

M. One of my concerns is of the poor kids that are down on the bottom of the ladder. Another one is a concern for what happens to the brightest and the best of us. I was a graduate student in psychology for a number of years. Because I have five kids, I had to take my courses two per semester. During the 60's I remember a book by a man by the name of Jerry somebody called *Student as Nigger*. I certainly felt as though there was a tremendous amount of almost hazing on the part of some faculty forcing graduate students to fit a model and a mold that would reflect the status quo. Is that still going on, do you know?

U. Well, I think what has happened is when I talked about all the fragmentations, what we have now are extreme positions and, oddly enough, particularly in universities on these kind of issues. Where you have each group taking an extreme position that says my group is being deprived and therefore any other group is the enemy. If you see it in the left you can see it in the right and you can see it in every one of the ethnic groups.

The notion that we are all in this soup together, while it is given a little lip service, it is very hard to get it going. It is very hard to get people to run on the school board who are not in because they have an agenda: bring taxes down—or, nobody should get any grades in school—and these polarizations make it impossible to arrive at sensible solutions in which there would be give and take, until you arrive at a kind of situation in which we all get something. When I came to the United States, we were living in a very poor part of Pittsburgh, PA called Minerstown, in which there were all immigrants from everywhere and a lot of blacks from the South and we didn't have very much, but we shared and we learned from each other and we thought America was not a bad place because these were all people who had been persecuted where they came from, so that America looked great.

M. My husband has been an academic all his life until he retired, and I remember how hard we worked. I helped him to get tenure through AAUP [American Association of University Professors], and yet it sometimes seems to me as though that was the beginning of the arrogance of the academic profession. Does that make sense to you?

U. I think it makes sense. What I said earlier is that you have arrogance on the part of some and on the part of others you have academics who say we shouldn't have any standards because it incriminates. So you get both extremes and the point is that we need to find the golden mean. This is our basic problem and I keep coming back to the reminder that we are the *United* States of America, and what has happened to the *United* part?

That was our magic, that's why we got all of these talented people coming out of nowhere and ending up very confident and reasonably well-to-do. You could come to the United States from abroad or you could grow up as a poor kid from the farm, and you had some chance of learning and bettering. You know, the American dream. The American dream is not only an economic dream that you could make more money, that your children would have a better income than you had, it was also a dream in terms of which you are making the kind of community, the kind of world that you feel comfortable to live in. It's that aspect of the American dream: what has happened to it?

C. Let me come in here on the issue of schools. I am an old teacher, but I am a young old teacher, whatever you want to say. Urie, I love the piece that you wrote where you laid out your bio-geological model and development and you laid out the basic principles. One thing that you said resonated tremendously with the way we practice teaching and learning in our little school. What you talked about was a model in which the system contributes to a child's growth and a child's learning and the system whereby kids get their motivation and their will to learn and their curiosity. You point out that they are informal systems and even to go one step further, you say that they are even irrational ones.

U. Exactly right. And it is only if those are in place that you could begin to set up formal systems.

C. Are you familiar with John Taylor Gatto?

U. No I am not.

C. John Taylor Gatto taught in the New York City public school system for about twenty-six years. In 1991 they made him New York State Teacher of the year. He was a bit of a rebel and he was getting middle school-aged kids out into the city and into apprenticeships and internships, throwing the whole textbook thing out the window and he was going his own way, breaking all the rules and so on and so forth. And then they gave him this darned award and he decided that was his ticket out, it was time to get out, that he couldn't live with the rest of what the system was teaching kids. He wrote a book called *Dumbing Us Down, The Hidden Curriculum Of Compulsory Education.*

U. Oh, was that his book, now I recognize that title.

C. The reason I bring up Gatto was because he, as well as most spokespeople for the homeschool movement are saying, as Ivan Illich was saying that thirty years ago, there is a hidden curriculum, so that the problem with the institution of education in the post- modern age or the post-industrial age, whatever you want to call it, is that it begins to be more and more openly professionalized and formalized.

U. That it loses the informality.

C. This notion of learning—when you start to call it education and teachers become educators, unfortunately the hidden effect of this institution which all kids get funneled through, every school where a kid has to go to from 9 to 3 every day, 180 days a year, that the whole thing has become packaged and professionalized and formalized. The most devastating effect of the whole thing is that parents more and more give over that prerogative to the schools. Oh, it's the school's job to teach values, it's the school's job to teach reading, I am going to let the school do that. Meanwhile both parents are going to go and earn our money so we can pay our rent or mortgage or whatever.

U. And you now have two households, because they are a split family.

C. Could comment on the ditch we are digging for ourselves in the terms of the role that education and schools now play? They didn't quite play that way when you were a kid.

U. No they were not.

C. Schools were different then. Nowadays schools themselves are taking the wrong direction all the while they are saying that they are taking us in the right direction. We will raise standards, we will make teachers get higher level degrees, but it is all taking us away from where kids' true needs are. Does that make sense?

U. Well I'll tell you. We may have some differences of opinion here in this way. And they are actually some data to back this up. There was a period historically in the United States mainly in the twenties and early thirties when the research was showing that middle-class kids were so dominated by their parents and their teachers that they were very submissive. They behaved properly. There were some studies done at Columbia and other places showing that middle class kids were not working, were not performing up to their abilities because they were being essentially inhibited. It was called "the good child in America." These kids wouldn't stand up to their convictions, they were afraid to think for themselves. This was the middle class. John Dewey was saying that ain't the way to do it. You have to learn to think for yourself; you have to— and so we began to have a shift.

And we began to have a shift in the data showing that the most effective kids were those that were being brought up in permissive households where standards were relaxed and so on. These kids were doing much better now in school and stood on their own two feet, especially boys. Girls still had a "niceness" complex, so that they weren't working up to their abilities. So what we needed was to open things up and allow children to follow, families to follow, a more permissive life. And for awhile then there were no differences in school performance on the basis of these kinds of things. And then a new trend began to develop in which it was the permissive families whose kids were beginning not to perform and beginning to get into trouble. Permissive middle class families.

Here I am talking about data. I was given a job of reconciling those things. So what we have was that we loosened things up and enabled kids to be more independent, individualistic, because they had actually been dominated, not only by their parents, but by the schools and by everything else. But then the data began to show that it was the kids who were from permissive homes who were also beginning to get into trouble and "do their own thing." We had a combination of that, of course, in the 60's.

So, in relation to the comment, I would say we need the same thing there that we need as a society as a whole; that is, families and schools have different tasks and neither can do the other's job. But each one needs the other. The family is the place where you build the motivation and where you build the emotional security and the early informal skills. There has to be this irrational feeling about your kids. You know that they are not the greatest kids in the world, but to you they are, and you will put in time with them that you wouldn't put with someone else. If the house is burning, you will rescue your kids first. That is what I mean about that irrational commitment. Schools cannot have an irrational commitment to particular children. It's very important for children to have the experience of having to learn in a more structured way from people who don't think they are the latest thing since sliced bread.

C. What if it isn't working?

U. Well, it is a very, very interesting question and I want to say a couple of things about it. We had six kids; now we have eleven grandchildren and we see all this played out in phone calls and visits all the time. And the situation is this. We brought up our own kids with a very strong emphasis on the importance of public schools. And our kids sort of went out with that feeling. Well, we have got some kids now living in big cities, they are grown and there are grandchildren and they are moving their kids out of the public schools, because the public schools are so chaotic. You can't learn there. And not only that, but what you learn there is hatred. So they are moving them into private schools and what happens in that kind of situation is that these are very good kids, but they don't know very much about the rest of their world.

U. Not because they don't read about it, but because they never see it. And they never mix with it and it is hard to have responsibility for something that you don't know. So, the question then comes, which way do we go? Or do we go both ways simultaneously? The challenge, the dilemma I think we all face, those of us who are concerned as we obviously share this in common as to where are society and our country and our values and our behaviors are drifting, it is how do we come to terms with the dilemma on the one hand that we care about our society, we care about the loss of values and the growing violence and all of that, but at the same time we care about our own children and our own family and we want to protect them from it, but in doing so we risk removing ourselves and our adult children—I am speaking from my generation now—from the larger battle to save the best of what our country supposedly stands for.

I would say also with chaos, it makes it very difficult to learn anything. My strategy as a developmental scientist and as someone who cares about where as a culture and as a nation are drifting is to say, right now my responsibility is to report to my country as best as I can what is happening to it, this is where we are drifting and if we continue to do what we have been doing, this is where we will end up.

M. That is certainly our concern as well.

C. I would love it if you gave it to us right now. That is really where the value of having this conversation lies. That is the most valuable contribution we can give to them.

U. I will be glad to do that. I can tell you things that in a certain sense everybody knows, but they don't know it in terms of what has been happening over time and what has been happening in the rest of the world.

Let me now be very specific and say, right now among the developed nations, and that is countries like France or Germany, Canada and nowadays Japan, just comparing the countries that have the international corporations, we have by far the highest rates of the problems that nobody wants—the highest rates of poverty, the highest rates of single parenthood, the highest rates of violence. Not only that but these trends have been rising steadily. Some have turned around relatively recently and have been going in bad directions like our economy, but others have been going on since after World War II.

You can say, now only a quarter of American children under six are living in single-parent families (actually, twenty-seven percent), but if you project that line, you see that if it keeps on going we are going to have not just a quarter, we are going to have a third and we may have a half of all children under six living in single-parent families. So then you say, "What does that mean. they live in single parent families?"

Well, one of the things that happens in the United States, if you become a single-parent family, your income goes down and you go below the poverty line. And one of the things that also happens when you are a single-parent family is that single-parent families tend to form when you are still quite young, like teenagers, and one thing that is going up very fast is unmarried mothers under twenty. They can't get a job, they bust out of schools.

So internationally we are peculiar. We are different from the rest of our neighbors, not that we aren't having the same problems, but we are ahead. We are the future, we are already there where they may be in time. Something isn't quite right in what is happening here, because we know what the cost of that is. We know that kids growing up with unmarried teenage mothers are not going to be able to very easily get a decent education or go to college or earn a living. And who are going to be the producers and the consumers? You know we are all talking about the fact that more people are working. Yes, more people are working but at wages at which they can't support their kids.

This is the direction that we are moving. One of the things that we have analyzed here every year for the past twenty years or so there has been a major survey done of college freshman and high school seniors and beliefs and behaviors. And among the beliefs that are changing markedly is trust in other people. It's not the majority, but it's on the increase, the belief that you really can't trust most people. Things are changing in that direction. You can console yourself by saying, well, they aren't the majority, the majority still believes in goodness. but when I first started working in Japan, one of the questions that I would get from my colleagues in child development is why do you have so many lawyers in the United States? I thought that was a strange question.

M. & C. (laughing).

U. But you know what they are referring to. They are referring to the fact that we no longer trust each other and everything goes to litigation. They said that the courtroom is not a place where decisions about families and children should be made. These are the things that I think we need to confront.

I will end with this marvelous thing that happened to me several years ago. There is an organization called the French American Corp., which used to be the French American Friendship Society. They are the leading businessmen who have mutual interests in France and the United States. And every year they have a tradition, a program that each country shows off what it thinks is good, in their own country. And the French decided to show the Americans the French child care system. And so they got a group of leading American businessman, brought them over—that is the way it works—and showed them. And then they came back to report and I happened to be asked to be the guy whose was going to be in the middle, you know between the French and make the discussion go. It was very interesting because the Americans kept saying who pays for this, who pays for this? There were all sorts of reactions. The first one was that for the children of France, there is no budget. And the Americans kept wanting to know what was the bottom line and how much does it cost and how do you pay for it? And it turns out to be a mixed system in which both the private and the public sector contributes. Oh, there were moments like this, there were these beautiful buildings that were in the child care sector—and the Americans said, this must just be in Paris. Oh no, this is all over, a little place here and a little place there. And they said, well, who pays for them? Oh, it is funded through national contests and our best architects. It is a great honor to be asked to design one of these buildings, it comes for free. So finally, we were all saying, what is the bottom line, what is the bottom line? Finally, the French consul in New York said, "I think that I can explain: when your country comes to war, as you see money is no object."

M. (laughing) Well said.

U. "Tell us you don't have the money. If you decided, tomorrow we go to war, you would not only find it, but a lot of people would get jobs. Well, there are a lot of people who have jobs and that's because they think it is of value." But now they are having some of the same problems we are—but they are not number one in all of.these lists.

C. Do you see signs of hope in this country?

U. Well, I wrote something about that which my colleagues in the books were doing together thought was not appropriate any longer so it is not there, but what I said there was, look, we've always had a history and made it by the skin of our teeth. You know, look at Washington crossing the Delaware: that didn't look like we were really going to make it. Look at what happened in the Civil War: that wasn't a pushover by any means and it didn't look like we were going to make it. Look at the Great Depression: people died of it. Each time by the skin of our teeth. Well, we are in there now again, but this time it is again on our soil and we can make it at the last possible moment, by suddenly discovering that there is a real problem, so we'd better do something about it. My hope is we will come to our senses.

M. Yeah (laughing), that would be good.

U. But I have no sign and I look up into the sky and I see no signs of a miracle coming.

C. Yeah, it's time for pray.

M. I have a friend who used to call himself a hopeless optimist.

U. I've called myself a pessimist in the short run but optimist in the long run. It's the same thing. Well, I see you folks are doing your damnedest and that means that there is still possibilities. I thank you for your understanding, for listening and for sharing.

M. Thank you so much.

U. All right, and you will keep me informed about the future of this? I hope that I was responsive to what your needs are.

M. Absolutely. Would you like a copy of the interview?

U. I would like to see the draft.

C. & M. OK. Bye.

U. Bye.

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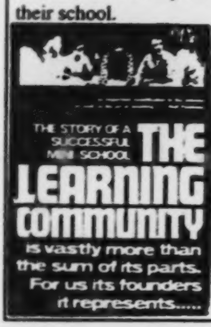
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John Taylor Gatto has been crossing this continent and the oceans that border it to respond to the pleas of families, organizations and institutions at their wits' ends over the dreadful situation we are in as a people in terms of our educational system. John earned his credentials the hard way, teaching in a Manhattan middle school classroom for well over twenty years, garnering thereby the Teacher of the Year Award for New York City two years in a row, and then the New York State Teacher of the Year award, which John says was part of his plan to be noticed as having something very important to say about the horrifying destruction of childhood which is a product of our American schooling! In addition to numerous articles, many of which have appeared in ΣKOΛE. John has written a book, Dumbing Us Down, *and is presently working to complete another,* The Empty Child.

We felt this article was important enough to be included it in both ΣKOΛE and the Journal of Family Life. *Hope you agree.*

MUDSILL THEORY, THE LANCASTER AMISH AND JAIME ESCALANTE

by John Taylor Gatto

The current system of government factory schooling is based on a belief that ordinary children cannot accomplish much, will not work hard unless coerced, tricked, or bribed, and will inevitably work for the balance of their post-school lives—if they work at all—in large government, corporate, or institutional employment pyramids managed by a professional élite.

As axiomatic as these usually unstated beliefs have become they would once have been considered outrageous. For the first two hundred and fifty years of American history, from Plymouth to Darwin's second bombshell, *The Descent of Man* (1871) the nation operated on a much different set of premises about human nature. Though recognizing a generic flaw which prevented even the best people from achieving perfection, it was widely held that great improvement, competency, dignity and self-respect were available to everyone who worked for it.

The three postulates that replaced this hard-nosed optimistic view had always characterized the outlook of the British nobility and the British state religion created by that nobility, but it was a position so violently unacceptable to Americans that we fought a war to rid ourselves of it. By the middle of the 19th century, however, with the growth of international trade and an increasing reliance on British bankers to finance American westward expansion, the poisonous outlook began to creep back into drawing room conversations. One British bloodline of intellectuals in particular supplied a major line of argument against a libertarian interpretation of human possibility, three cousins: Thomas Malthus, Charles Darwin and Francis Galton.

Malthus' *Essay* on population growth inevitably outstripping food supply sent chills through the entire European/American élite establishment at the beginning of the 19th century. He said nothing could halt the inexorable march of mathematics—people grew geometrically, food grew arithmetically—and so it was better to be cruel, work people to death and whatever else you did, by all means don't "educate" them. In the middle of the century cousin number two said people were descended from protozoic particles through an endless living chain which had no other meaning than to kill off its weak links and allow the stronger to reproduce themselves. The word "education" in such a reality would have absolutely no meaning. A little over a decade later cousin two, Charles Darwin, wrote a second book even more shocking than the first. In book two, cousin two established a very complex revolutionary ladder made up of "the races of man," the label "race" having many more levels than we think of in our latter-day usage. Darwin said that unless steps were taken to keep the lower orders from breeding with the higher orders the human race would go crashing backwards down the ladder of evolution into the primordial slime from which it had come.

This second book had such pointed advice for public policymakers and wealthy special interests that while it cannot be said to have been "suppressed," you never hear mention of it today. Not because its advice has been ignored but for just the opposite reason. When the most powerful men in America held a dinner for Darwin's authoritative publicist, Herbert Spencer, in 1882 at Delmonico's restaurant in New York, and presented him with $400,000 in gold as a tribute of their affection for what he had taught them about "survival of the fittest," at that minute the future of American mass compulsion schooling was settled. It would be the first line of defense against an evolutionary catastrophe. Nothing could be done to help the "lesser" races anyway. Keeping them in total ignorance was the most merciful thing to do until a more final solution would be worked out.

Cousin number three, Francis Galton, for all practical purposes the creator and distributor of all the statistical numbers games that infest American and global scholarship, commerce and government thinking these days, worked out a variety of tools and techniques to assure the best would breed with the best and the worst would, step by step, be bred out of existence. Galton wrote the definitive book on the inheritance of intelligence (and conversely the inheritance of stupidity), created forced sterilization legislation to be used on the "unfit," which was tested all over the U.S. by 1906 and which became the pilot for Nazi Germany's forced sterilization policy and invented single handedly the "science" of eugenics.

So from 1800 to 1900 one British family provided scientific and mathematical reasons why the dumb should stay dumb, and couldn't do anything else. Ordinary children cannot accomplish much, they cannot accomplish anything unless coerced, tricked or bribed (that's of course behavioral psychology in a nutshell), and they must be taken care of like children for all their days.

These three postulates were dubbed "Mudsill theory" by none other than Abraham Lincoln, who set out to contest them in the 1850s when they were still in an embryonic state. "Mudsill" refers to the simple earthen entryway to cabins and rude homes and hence was a shorthand for dismissing the people who lived in these places as hopeless. Mudsill theory became the reigning school philosophy, though not, for a longer time, its practice, by the beginning of the 20th century. To understand mudsill theory better I want to take you back to Abe Lincoln's day and Andrew Jackson's—and to an article called "the Working Classes" which appeared in the famous *Boston Quarterly Review* in 1840.

The author of "The Working Classes" was a famous 19th century man of affairs whose name would have been recognizable everywhere then, Orestes Brownson. Brownson's attention had been drawn by the drumbeating of Horace Mann and his crowd for legislation creating an institution of mass state compulsion schooling. Brownson looked behind the public rhetoric and felt compelled to speak out against the idea.

Horace Mann, said Brownson, was the front man for a syndicate trying to impose British merchant/banker/industrialist world-view as the gospel of a new religion. "A system of education so constituted," he said, "may as well be a religion established by law." Mann's heavy financial backing was coming from railroad builders, coal-mining interests, real-estate developers and commercial/industrial promoters of national and global business schemes.

There was nothing popular, local or personal about this artificial conceit of forced schooling; its purpose was to weaken people's capacity to educate themselves, to break their loyalty to family, church and land in order to release customers and workforce for élite schemes of economics and social ordering. Brownson said the teaching function belonged in a democracy to the whole community, not to a controlled monopoly, and we had already become the best educated people in history on our own hook. "Children," he said, "were far better off educated by the general pursuits, habits and moral tone of the community" than by a privileged class of corporate or government agents.

The mission of the United States, its justification for existence according to Brownson, was to "raise up the ordinary and make every man really free and independent." Whatever schooling should be allowed in this kind of society under government auspices should be dedicated to the principle of independent livelihoods and close, self-reliant families.

Now whether you agree with Brownson or not, the point is that this historic reaction to the coming of forced schooling raises a serious question we are still asking today: If schools cannot teach us to read, write and count, why do we have them? What agenda are these places really running and who authorized it? Think of it this way: If there *are* high-level undiscussed agendas in public schooling enacted without public awareness or debate, then school becomes a kind of behavioral conditioning laboratory serving those who superintend its real mission—which most of us are unaware of—against those who do not.

However we can ignore this larger question for the moment and spend some time productively on whether Brownson's faith in ordinary people was justified—was there any evidence in the time from which he wrote that common people were much more than Malthus, Darwin, Galton, Mann & Co. thought they were? In 1990 the labor scholar Chris Clarke published a book entitled *The Roots of Rural Capitalism* in which he explored the labor economy of the 1840s in the U.S. In it he reported the general labor market in that period was highly undependable because it was shaped by family concerns, personal farming took priority, then family duty—any hired work outside of that had to adapt. So rural manufacture had a homespun, chatty character.

Wage labor was only a supplement to a broad strategy of household economy, one in which most households aimed at self-sufficiency in food, clothing, construction, furnishings, candles, entertainment, medical care, old-age assistance, everything. Marriages were partnerships of home-centered work. By age five children were active participants in the work of the household. The normal family was a production unit, spinning out a large part of the meaning and substance of its own life—the era of consumption for wages had hardly begun and the era of government as father and mother wasn't even dreamed of.

Of course people worked for each other and even worked for wages full-time when they were young, but the ideal and expectation was that this was for the purpose of assembling a stake to strike out on one's own. Christopher Lasch tells the story of Sam Goodrich of Ridgefield, Connecticut who remembered in his diary a time when servants, "were of the neighborhood, generally daughters of respectable farmers and mechanics" and "servitude implied no degradation."

Any successful tradition of self-reliance like we once had requires a theory of human nature to sustain it which allows for self-improvement; before an economy of independent livelihoods can be broken apart and scavenged for its labor units, people first have to be brought to believe in a pessimistic appraisal of human potential, something that once bore the label, "mudsill theory."

I learned about Abraham Lincoln's rebuttal of mudsill theory from Richard Hofstadter's 1948 book, *The American Political Tradition.* Lincoln had become aware that an opinion was circulating in the U.S. out of England that it is useless and dangerous to educate working people very far; he attacked mudsill theory as a distortion of real human nature because as he looked around him most of the people he saw had independent livelihoods or were working toward them. The notion that nobody would work unless they were pushed or tricked particularly bothered him. Here are his actual words from a speech made in September, 1959 to the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society:

> Having assumed [that nobody would work unless forced to] they proceed to consider whether it is best that capital shall hire laborers, and thus induce them to work by their own consent; or *buy* them, and drive them to it without their consent.

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> Having proceeded so far they naturally conclude that all laborers are necessarily either hired laborers or slaves, one or the other. They further assume that whoever is once a *hired laborer is fatally fixed in that* condition for life; and thence again that his condition is as bad as or worse than that of a slave. This is the mudsill theory.

What contradicted mudsillism for Lincoln was the "inconvenient fact" that a large majority of Americans were "neither hirers nor hired." Now whether you believe a common economy of small proprietorship is possible or not it's clear that Abe Lincoln thought he was describing one as an American reality in 1859.

Where you and I are, perched on the cusp of the 21st century, Lincoln's independent social reality seems a daydream, yet we need some way to explain the baffling example of the Mondragon Cooperative in the Basque Region of Spain where every one of 120,000 families is indeed an independent producer, which has existed through depressions and recessions for 70 years without a single year of negative growth. And we have to explain away 150,000 Old Order Amish who enjoy nearly universal proprietorship in farms and small enterprises. For both these groups, one American, one Spanish, it is as if giant socialistic governments, giant international corporations and colossal hospitals, social work establishments, colleges and institutional schools have been irrelevant for the entire 20th century. It suggests a third way—which I confess has loomed larger and larger in my own thinking for quite some time now.

Amish prosperity, strong family, strong faith, strong community, is something I'll speak of in more detail in a little while, but in thinking of it—in contrast to a mudsill society—we need to remember the good things weren't handed to them, but achieved in the face of daunting odds, often against the active enmity of the state and its agencies which have long sought to de-Amish the Amish. The Amish survived and even prevailed against odds. Doesn't that put a base of credibility under Lincoln's or Brownson's assertion that we once operated under a realistic national goal of independence for all? I mean, if the Amish have pulled it off when such an aim contradicted the hidden national agenda, surely the rest of us were doing it when it accorded with our national mission.

Now it takes no great intellect to see that anti-mudsill curriculum taught broadly in today's economic environment would directly attack the dominant economy and might provoke a disaster. This wouldn't happen intentionally, but the lack of malice would be poor compensation for those whose businesses were destroyed because they could neither attract employees nor, more importantly, attract customers, because people were doing for themselves what had heretofore been done by governments, corporations and institutions. Assuming what Lincoln and Brownson say actually happened is still *possible*—and to assume that you have to discard bell-curve assertions—to tailor schooling to an independent livelihood perspective would, no matter how gently you approached it, wreck the current economy and political state.

This is why many alternative schooling ideas fizzle out quickly. However inadvertently, most of them breed an independence of mind which inevitably gets people thinking about self-sufficiency. From the point of view of big government, big corporation, big institution, the incentive to support educational practices whose graduates would not fit easily into your own plans just isn't there. To me it seems inconceivable that it would ever be. Why would anyone who makes a living selling certain goods, say, cigarettes or processed cheese, or services, say welfare inspections or school teaching, be enthusiastic about schools that taught, even indirectly, that those things weren't necessary? What about schools that taught "less is more?" How could that be good for business? What about schools that taught that television-viewing, even of PBS, alters the structure of the mind for the worse? Can you imagine that being encouraged?

When I see the dense concentration of big business names associated with school reform I get crazy, not because they are bad people—most aren't any worse than you or me—but because the best interests of a developing mind and corporate interests can't possibly be a good fit; and frequently they are violently antagonistic. Think of cigarettes, whisky, fast cars and foxy young women as icons of the marketing-promulgated good life. Morality aside, the mental conditioning it takes to accommodate such things as the goals of work don't live easily with home, hearth, family, intimate friendships or thoughts of any transcendent reality.

All school curricula except the most basic will either secure or disestablish things as they are; it's not a polar thing, of course, but the cumulative effect of centralized curriculum tends in one or another direction: consumption...or production.

Mudsill theory prepares the ground for an outlook on ordinary people as "masses," simplified consumption units biologically incompetent for much other than to be held in a low-level narcotized state until public policy decides what to do with them in a micro-chip age. It doesn't require much imagination to figure out what eventually the answer has to be.

You'll have figured out by now that I think we have to scrap mudsill theory before mudsill theory scraps us. Getting rid of it is a necessity, but unfortunately there is no painless transition formula. The thing is institutionalized in every school—with buzzers, routines, standardized assessments, comprehensive lifelong rankings intermingled with an interminable presentation of carrot and stick. The positive and negative reinforcement schedules of behavioral psychology are only possible to think of as tools if you subscribe to mudsillism. It is deeply ingrained in the whole work/school/media constellation.

At the heart of any school reform that isn't simply tuning the mudsill mechanism lie two hypotheses: 1) That talent, intelligence, grace and accomplishment are within the reach of every kid who hasn't been too badly damaged. 2) That we are better off generating our own lines of meaning for ourselves; independent livelihoods are superior than working for others.

But how on earth can you believe these things in the face of a century of institution-shaping/economy-shaping that claims something different? And in the face of a constant stream of media threats that jobs are vanishing, that the workplace demands more regulation and discipline, and that "foreign competition" will bury us if we don't comply with expert prescriptions in the years ahead? One powerful antidote to such propaganda is looking at evidence which contradicts official propaganda—like women who earn as much as doctors selling fresh-cooked shrimp from old white trucks parked beside the road, or 13-year-old Greek boys who don't have time to waste going to school because they expect to be independent businessmen before most kids are out of college.

I hope at least a few of you did a double-take on my last non sequitur but I promise to tell you about both of these anti-mudsill phenomena because I had personal experience with both not very long ago. First the Greek-American boy whom we shall call Stanley.

Not very long ago I had a thirteen-year-old Greek boy named Stanley as one of my students. Stanley was big, very bright, hard as a rock and only came to school about one day a month. It seems Stanley had five aunts and uncles, all in business for themselves before they were twenty-one: a florist, an unfinished furniture builder, a delicatessen owner, a taxicab owner and a dry cleaner/laundry. When Stanley cut school he passed from store to store where in exchange for free labor he got to learn the business. "This way I decide which business I like well enough to set up for myself," he told me when I was ordered to put the heat on him for absenteeism. "Listen. You tell me what books to read and I'll read them, but I don't have time to waste in school if I don't want to end up like the rest of these jerks working for someone else." After I heard that, I couldn't in good conscience lean on him to stay in school. Could you? Why? So he could be "socialized"?

In 1896 there were five thousand Old Order Amish in the United States, now there are one hundred fifty thousand of them in nineteen states and several foreign countries. 85% of their grown children freely chose the Amish way of life even though nobody holds a gun to their heads. You might compare that to the grandsons and granddaughters of the Puritans who left the church in such great numbers it had to continually rewrite its own rules just to stay in business. And after two hundred years had virtually collapsed into secular forms. Of course the Amish need to prove themselves a little longer, but a 3000% growth in numbers in the most secular of all centuries isn't doing too bad so far. Consider that virtually 100% of these people are engaged in an independent livelihood though none go beyond eighth grade—and wouldn't even go that far except the law forced them to. Almost 50% of the Lancaster Amish operate small businesses, not farms, although not one of them uses a computer, electricity, or drives a motorcar. The community is crime-free, prosperous and has a 5% business failure rate compared to a non-Amish rate of 85% among computer-using, electricity dependent, motorcar-mad un-Amish competitors.

Isn't that a puzzle? According to mudsill-bell-curve theory, it isn't strange, it's *impossible*. The next time you hear your children better shape up if they hope to survive in the global economy, remember the Amish. Why should you raise children to be hired hands anyway? The Amish don't.

Well, I promised to tell you about a Shrimp lady who makes as much as a doctor, so here is:

In the northeast corner of an island a long way from here an older woman sells plates of cooked shrimp and rice from out of an old white truck in a remote corner of the island. Nobody is around truck. A lot of people pass, however, because the road she's on goes to a famous surfing beach which attracts crowds year round.

She sells only shrimp and rice plus hot dogs for the kids and cold soda. The license to do this costs $500 a year, $43.25 a month, less than a dollar-and-a-half a day.

Anyone could do what this lady is doing who would get together about $15 thousand in seed capital. She's fifty-nine, has a high-school diploma, a nice smile and cooks good shrimp. A hand-lettered sign advertises the wares beside the road.

The day I stood in line five customers were in front of me. They bought fourteen plates between them and fourteen sodas. I bought two and two. By the time I got to the window 5 new customers had arrived behind me. I was intrigued enough to sit across the road for two hours and count the sales: forty-one plates, fifteen hot-dogs, fifty sodas. The plates were $9.95, the dogs $1.25, the sodas $1.00. She had taken in close to $500 in two hours and her sign informed me she was open eight hours, seven days a week. Was it possible this truck was grossing nearly three-quarters of a million dollars a year?

I was curious enough to come back the next day and go through the same observation and the next and the next. My wife Janet is a graduate of the famous Culinary Institute of America. She estimated the net after all expenses on the shrimp was $7.00; on the hot dog, eighty cents, and on the soda 60¢. Over the next few weeks we got to know the lady casually. She was delighted to tell us she averaged I00-150 shrimp sales a day, but on special days up to 300. She worked the stand part of the time and when she wasn't there one of her three daughters did. All were grown and had families, and all were supported by that old white truck! It was a revelation. None of the daughters had gone beyond high school, nor felt a need to; all were intelligent, fun to talk to, happy people. And why not?

Halfway around the world in Manhattan, on the north side of the Metropolitan Museum where only one hot dog wagon is allowed, and the rights to the spot are sold at auction yearly, the winning bid for 1997 cost $316,200. I don't know the degree of schooling the cart operator possesses but I do know he pays nearly $900 a day for the right to sell hot dogs. Come to think of it he looked pretty happy himself.

Studying Chris Clarke, the Amish, my Stanley, the shrimp lady, or the hot dog peddler at the Metropolitan wouldn't be enough to float school reform aimed at small proprietorship because we would still face the propaganda barrier erected by the claims of statistical behaviorism. Its preposterous argument that it can demonstrate mathematically most kids don't have the right stuff. This, of course, is the ill-disguised Darwinistic argument that school is a kind of ambulance institution carrying the detritus of evolution for treatment. Could all the pedagogical scientists have gotten it wrong? Are ordinary people better than they think?

I found an important clue in Charles Murray's recent bestseller, *The Bell Curve*, where Murray denounces Marva Collins' description of completely literate black ghetto preteens. Oddly enough that was my own experience with black ghetto thirteen-year-olds but I was curious to see Dr. Murray so exercised. So certain was Murray that Collins was "mistaken" he dismissed her narrative while admitting he had no first-hand evidence contradicting it. The light went on when I realized bell curve mudsillism would not be credible if Marva Collins was telling the truth.

Is Marva Collins telling the truth? I think so.

Back in Orestes Brownson's day the central promise of American life was democratization of intelligence and winning an independent competency upon which to exercise that intelligence. In America every one got the chance to develop intelligence, not just the elites. Beyond the narrow uses of intelligence for work it found many private uses inside home and family circles. Public argument was the great incentive to master knowledge. But after Darwin a horde of voices said argument was a waste of time for the stupid masses. Mudsill theory became scientized with Charles Darwin, with the rise of the German research university in America, and with the religion of numbers and bell-curve statistics.

The wholesale denial that ordinary people could be intellectually competent which took place between 1890 and 1920 was always framed in the language of laboratory and university. It caused a decisive deconstruction of schooling for intelligence to take place around the turn of the last century, a deconstruction which accelerated rapidly after WW II and raced ahead after the cleverly contrived Sputnik hysteria of the late 1950s.

The best antidote to mudsill poison is the embarrassing story of Jaime Escalante, an overage Peruvian immigrant math teacher who wears a golf cap and looks like an angry truck driver. When I caught up to Escalante he had already been made famous by the film *Stand and Deliver.* Unbeknownst to the average filmgoer, Escalante was driven out of the scene of his triumphs, Garfield High, by a steady barrage of harassment, sabotage and vilification on the part of his co-workers and administration. Was he just another liar as Murray accused Marva Collins of being? Because if he wasn't, he was just as deadly a threat to bell-curve mudsillism as Collins.

Fortunately numbers are the voice of God in our pedagogical sub-religion and numbers are available through which the performance of Escalante's ignorant clientele, sons and daughters of Mexican immigrant parents, can be compared with offspring of high-tech. Silicon Valley families—or with kids rich and poor across the nation for that matter. When Jaime came to Garfield in 1974 the Western Association of Schools had threatened to revoke its accreditation. Keep that in mind as the baseline.

By 1987 only three public schools in the nation were producing more Advanced Placement calculus students than Garfield, and the school was setting standards in algebra and trigonometry, too. His percentage of poverty-stricken Hispanic students passing the difficult second year advanced placement calculus tests was the highest in the state. Few groups of privileged white students even came close. The full implications of this data are fairly shocking because they tend to suggest—not that Escalante is a great teacher (which I'm sure he is)—the real role of orthodox government schooling as a screen to control the rate and extent of learning, or to prevent it entirely in many cases.

Escalante's methodology is astonishingly old-fashioned, dirt cheap, and independent of star teaching for its success. Its simplicity makes it fully revolutionary since anybody could apply the same principles easily and cheaply. Its more a matter of attitude than brilliance. But widespread application would cost materials producers a bundle, and there would be a loss of jobs for remedial teachers and many ripple effects in the civil service economy.

Picture a classroom crammed with signs, posters, banners, all hand- lettered. One reads, "Stand and Deliver," another "Students who say it can't be done should not interrupt students who are doing it," another "Calculus need not be made easy, it is easy already," and another, "*Ganas* is all you need" (a Spanish word for "wanting it badly enough"). Escalante's lessons are punctuated with an endless stream of personal philosophy and moralisms, all delivered with high energy as though he meant what he said. Every student signs a contract outlining what is expected, the highest standards of effort, the toughest challenges tackled, the highest quality of individual attention owed from the instructor.

What you and I have just talked about is the Darwinian attitude that most of us are hopeless anyway, and useless in any case. Stated more scientifically and less bluntly, this is the attitude which has driven the managers of government school for a century, and drives them at this minute. What Abraham Lincoln called "mudsill theory" is alive and well all over the policy circles of America; you might look at it as the necessary attitude to underwrite the end of national sovereignty (what's the point, the people can't handle the rights extended them by the Constitution?), and the advent of a global order where Americans are leveled into a global mass, dumbed down for their own good, stripped of useful knowledge by schooling, and narcotized by endless rivers of mass entertainment, low-level public spectacles, and trivialized sexuality.

The richest and most bitter irony is that what is happening unless we stop it is precisely what British class theory has always held must happen, and the British state religion—which holds that social class is divinely ordained and must not be challenged—has always taught in its schools. Stay in your place, listen to the paternal/maternal state, don't question your betters. This is exactly the reason we threw off the yoke of England three long lifetimes ago.

I'm well aware that each one of us here has been trained to look at Russia as the enemy or China as the enemy or Japan as the enemy or—give me a break, the tiny island of Cuba as the enemy, but I ask you consider in the days ahead that the real enemy is an ancient one we know in our bones, the British idea of a Royal Mind that brooks no opposition, thinks globally, is endlessly ambitious, and can only survive amidst a dumbed down population.

From reading and thinking about American history for more than half a century, from looking at kids like Stanley, people like the Lancaster Amish, teachers like Jaime Escalante and Marva Collins, strangers like the Shrimp Lady, I'm utterly convinced of a bad thing and a good: the bad is that we have been utterly euchred and our country stolen from us, the good is that there is a tremendous untouched genius locked up in ordinary people that could still turn this mess around in a generation. Children inspired to initiate their own lines of economic meaning, who come to see themselves as able to handle the leadership demands of an independent livelihood will have a fighting chance to do well for themselves by conventional standards and in the things that really count which we appear embarrassed to even talk about any more, so far are they from what public life is about.

But a warning: the reverse is not true. If you allow your child to be "loved" by ranks of paid strangers and to be trained as a hired hand—which is all mudsill pedagogy allows—you will foreclose the palette of human possibility. You will become the enemy within, narrowing your children's focus to what the boss wants, and instilling enough fear in them a lifetime won't get rid of it. To any chiefs and bigshots who might come across this old schoolteacher's words I leave them with this appeal and warning: training children to be cogs in a state/corporation machine is not sound public policy for a nation with the historical character of the United States. If you sow these seeds you will reap the whirlwind.

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teacher

John Potter made a study of Japanese education the basis for his Masters Thesis at Antioch College (a modified version of the second chapter of which appeared in the Winter, 1995, issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ). Married with a child, John lives in Kobe, which, you might recall, was hit by a very damaging earthquake last year! We were relieved that the Potters survived this disaster with only some damage to their house! John, who taught at Summerhill in England for two years, as he tells us below, sent **The Journal of Family Life** ***a splendid interview he and his wife had conducted with Okinawan Shoukichi Kina—singer, songwriter, musician and environmental activist—which appeared in the "Mother Earth" issue, Winter, 1996. We are grateful to John for sending us this fascinating account of the reactions of his Japanese students to news of the existence of democratic education!***

EDUCATION IN A JAPANESE UNIVERSITY

by John Potter

Introduction:

The following is a personal account of an Education course that I taught at a university in Japan. It also includes the students' own ideas of the course, which introduced progressive and radical ideas in education to them.

The Situation:

As an ex-Summerhill teacher (for a period of just two years (1980-82) I am often asked in Japan to talk about my time at the school during the period when Ena Neill was in charge of the running of Summerhill. In 1993 I completed a Master of Arts degree through Antioch University in Ohio. A major part of the course was the study of 'Alternative Education' which culminated in my thesis, which was on the influence of A.S. Neill in Japan and specifically at Kinokuni Children's Village, a 'modified model' of Summerhill opened by Shinichiro Hori in 1992. During the year of my thesis I was asked by two acquaintances, both education professors at Kansai University, to write a chapter for a book they were editing. The second chapter of my thesis, which was a critical look at Japanese education, was rewritten for this purpose and eventually published along with eleven other essays in the book *Gakko to iu Kosaten* (subtitled in English *Crossroads for School*). Thanks to the efforts of the same professors, I was then asked to take on an Education class at Kansai University during the year 1995-6. It was a one-year course, the aim of which was to teach Japanese students something of educational philosophy while at the same time giving them practice in reading selected works by famous educators (preferably Western ones) in English.

There are over a thousand universities and junior colleges in Japan. University students study for four years and junior college students for two. At the beginning of the 1990s there were four hundred ninety-nine universities throughout the country. These are divided into three kinds: those run by the state (called 'national'), those that are administered by prefectural, city or municipal governments ('public'), and those that are privately run. Except for some of the 'top' private universities, the national and public institutions are more highly regarded, but the overwhelming majority (three hundred sixty-four universities as of 1990) are private.

In the city of Osaka alone there are fifteen universities called Osaka *something* University, the most prestigious being the national Osaka University, and this is not counting the numerous junior colleges that exist alongside them. So it is easy to see that university and college education is something aspired to by a great many people. Because of the proliferation of universities they tend to be unofficially ranked in status according to the difficulty of entrance to them, which is by examination alone. Preparation for entry to university is what takes up a great deal of time at school and the 'examination hell' of Japanese children is well known. Ironically, once entry to university or college is achieved the student might well consider that he or she can relax somewhat as the demands made on higher education students are often much less. The hiatus between the exam hell of school and the grind of adult employment is sometimes—rightly or wrongly—characterized by the Japanese public as a time of 'university paradise'.

Kansai University is a private university which is situated in Suita, a suburb of the large commercial and industrial city of Osaka. It was originally founded as Kansai Law School in 1886 and was renamed Kansai University in 1905. The main part of the university moved to its present spacious site in Suita in 1922. The Education department is one of the eight departments comprising the Faculty of Letters and offers courses in both

Psychology and Education. The university brochure characterizes the atmosphere of the courses as 'liberal', quoting Rousseau in its introduction. The university has a generally high reputation among private universities in Japan. Graduates from the Education department, according to the brochure, "predominantly choose to work in Education or social welfare services, or else take employment with one of a wide range of enterprises in the private sector, among which figure prominently those concerned with the information industry." (*Kansai University: A Guide*, 1994-1995, p. 24). The total number of undergraduate students at the university is around twenty-five thousand. There are also international exchange programmes with universities in Australia, Belgium, China, the U.S.A., and the University of Birmingham in the U.K. It is a big university, even by Japan's standards.

The Course:

The aim of my course was to introduce Western educators. This was mainly through reading selected parts of things they had written and then, hopefully, discussing them. I was told that there were just two classes for this purpose and that about fifty students who would be required to enroll could choose either my class or another one run by a full-time Japanese professor in the department. As it was the first time that a foreigner such as myself had been invited to do this class, and the students would be required to read and possibly discuss educational matters in English, it was thought by all that probably most students would be scared off and I would be left with a nice small group of less than ten.

I was given almost complete freedom to decide how and what to teach, except that it should be related to my specialized area of study from the MA thesis—namely, A.S. Neill and John Dewey, plus whoever or whatever else I might want to add. The usual format of the Japanese university lesson consists rather heavily of the teacher lecturing while the students take notes which they then repeat in order to pass exams. I think that my arrival as part-time teacher—with a background at Summerhill and a wealth of radical ideas—was rather welcomed by many in the Education department as a useful experiment in attempting to change in some small way the predictable path of university teaching. The content of my course, which I outlined in the university brochure, included references to the similarities and differences between Neill and Dewey. The forerunners of Neill and Dewey as well as people influenced by them would be covered as well as some time spent "contrasting and comparing other progressive and radical Western educators of this century." In addition I hoped to cover "modern developments in schools and education emanating from Neill and Dewey's work," and "recent thinkers such as Alice Miller." And all this in twenty-two lessons. Better to try and pack too much in than be stuck with nothing new to discuss, I thought.

The Japanese school year starts in April. From the beginning I had a surprise with the number of students. Twenty-five had enrolled for the class: I had expected ten at the most. Of these, twenty-two were third year students and the other three were fourth years. However, four of them were never to appear again after the first lesson. The brave ones who remained comprised fourteen male students and seven women, all Education majors. Despite their having studied Education for a minimum of two years before entering this class I was advised to assume they had little or no prior knowledge of Neill, Dewey and the others I intended to introduce to them. This proved to be a wise move.

My experience as a part-time teacher in Japan has lasted for several years and I have taught in both public and private universities as well as junior colleges. However, all my previous experience had been in teaching the English language to Japanese students and so I was rather wary, though excited, about taking on a course such as this. I had never taught adults about Education, and could hardly say that I was a fluent Japanese speaker. Certainly, discussion of educational concepts in Japanese would not be easy. I was reassured though by members of the department that the students' level of English was probably good—the purpose of the lessons was of course to read about Education in English—and that I could if necessary get by entirely in English. This turned out to be wildly optimistic. Although the understanding of written English of the students was quite good, listening and speaking was another matter and the lessons were eventually conducted in a strange mix of Japanese and English.

The typical lesson consisted of two or three pieces of relevant material by one of the educators I had chosen, being read by the students in English. These extracts would then be translated into Japanese by them—preferably as a joint activity in pairs or groups—and finally discussed by the class. The students were to find the translation part the easiest, though the most boring. The discussions were extremely difficult to get going, not least because of Japanese students' unfamiliarity with debating or giving opinions in front of others.

Here are some comments I wrote after each class:

12th April. The first lesson. Class explanation—a sheet of paper telling students what to expect was given out, in both English and Japanese. Students were encouraged to give me their own opinions on education and were told that assessment for the course would be based on three things: attendance, reports, and tests. This was a requirement from the university. (*In fact, I gave no tests*). I suggest on the sheet two books would be useful to buy as we are going to read several parts from both of them. They were Neill's *The New Summerhill* and Dewey's *Experience and Education.* (*In fact, no one, to my knowledge, bought either of them*). The kind of rules for this class are much vaguer and 'freer' than for my English classes as I had assumed that this, being a 'good' university, would have more eager and diligent students (*However, apart from a few this did not really seem to be the case. Attendance, for example, was very erratic for many students.).*

An 'aims of education' questionnaire which was given to the students was completed with many seeing rebellion or creativity as important. This augurs well, I thought. In a subsequent activity they read some very short quotes from Neill, Dewey and Homer Lane, and had to guess which was which. One student told me he thought the best quote was Neill's "The first thing a child should learn is to be a rebel."

19th April. In this second lesson a new student joins us. She is Miyuki, a keen education student who has asked to attend the class even though she does not need to take my course and will not be graded. She already knows and is friendly with Mayumi, another student who seems interested. Mayumi sat on her own at the front for the first two lessons, then joined Miyuki. Male students and female students have segregated themselves from each other and sit on opposite sides of the room in rows of individual desks, though it's too small for them to completely escape each other. In general the female students seem much more ready to take part in the lesson, though one male student, Shiro, seems to be the class swot as he arrives with a bag full of education books and takes copious notes. It turns out that he is twenty-five and under some pressure from his family to 'do well' as he has a younger brother at the prestigious Kyoto University. Of the other men, Katsu is quiet and defensive, Kaoru is cheerful but sleepy, and Nori is the only one in the class who speaks fairly good English. For this second lesson we had an introduction to Neill and Summerhill, reading a profile of Neill and translating some of his quotes.

26th April. Video: 'Being Happy is What Matters Most.' This is the 25 minute television documentary about Summerhill shown in 1987 by Central Television in Britain, and gives a good idea of what the school is like. Most students were riveted to it, though Kaoru is sleepy again. The sight of nude bathing at Summerhill wakes him up with a start, though.

Get the idea for students to write questions/comments and give to me at the end of the lesson, as they are so reluctant to air their views in public. This makes a lot of work for me as they then have to be translated at home and I have to write briefish replies, but it seems the best way to continue. Their questions are interesting. Some ask about nude bathing, most are shocked by children smoking, all are surprised at Summerhill. Only Miyuki has ever heard of the school before. Katsu asks if it is "a proper school" and Kaoru thinks it is "too free." Nori thinks that Summerhill students will become "spoilt, selfish people" as adults. Mostly the female students are more positive, though cautious.

17th May. Answers and more questions. In answering students' questions it is difficult to know how much to push my own opinion which is strongly in favour of Neill and freedom. However, I think that I should be as honest as possible and that giving a clear reaction to their questions and comments will also help to provoke much-needed real discussion. They know, after all, that I am a former Summerhill teacher.

24th May. Neill again. Summerhill and Self-Government. We watched a video of meetings at Summerhill with transcripts of very brief scenes from the meetings for them to read in English and Japanese. They also read pieces by Neill on the school meeting and on self-government taken from *The New Summerhill*. After this second video the students' opinions relax a bit on freedom. Difference between men and women—the women are more attentive. The men, especially those who seem not so keen to study, are less inclined to be sympathetic to ideas of freedom.

31st May. Basic ideas of Neill, then an introduction to John Dewey. Mayumi (who is always late for class) asks about my own ideas. There is some difficulty of getting them to discuss or give opinions openly, contrasted with their openness in writing.

7th June. Trouble understanding Dewey, and his theory of experience from the book *Experience and Education.* The English is much more difficult to understand than Neill's. Infrequency of some students' attendance: Masato appears (late) after four week absence, then falls asleep. Katsu appears after long absence. (However, Mayumi and Miyuki miss class for the first time). My changing views of what they should do in class: why should they have to read difficult, boring English if I can make them understand by summarizing or by giving Japanese translations? Nori says in English that my class is "very gorgeous." Shiro and Naga seem to have made friends and are two of the few very conscientious male students.

14th June. More trouble with Dewey but this time I prepared 'summary sheets' to make it easier. Why shouldn't they read in Japanese also—as main purpose is surely to understand education, not to study English. Erratic attendance: e.g., Katsu, Kaoru. Also, these two are some of the most critical of free ideas. Interesting. Mayumi surprisingly quiet. Later I discovered the reason from another professor who told me he had reduced her to tears before my lesson for her poor homework effort. However, she smiled to herself when I asked everyone to *please* discuss Dewey in groups. The three groups came up with quite different conclusions. The men said school *did* give them the desire to go on learning—the women said it didn't. Both in agreement about Kansai University: that the lessons were not so interesting. On the question of Dewey and 'little schooling' being a good thing, the men said Dewey was wrong, the women said he was right. Once again, I think, this shows the men in a poorer light. (Or at least a more conservative one).

Eleven students today. Rather quiet. However, a real discussion almost happened!

21st June. Ten students—many late. Unfortunately, I expected them to be much better at this university than they are about this kind of thing and so didn't make it clear enough at the outset about attendance and lateness. Ran into Mayumi after class and went with her some of the way on the train. Neill/Dewey quotes. Nori thinks emotional freedom is "not important" and is "nothing to do with education." No Shiro today for the first time. Finished with introduction to Julie Redpath, a British teacher who is visiting Japan and will provide an interesting diversion as next week's guest. She will answer questions about education in Britain and in the countries she has taught.

28th June. Julie's visit. She was questioned quite freely about the different countries she's lived in, as she has worked as a teacher in Greece, Thailand and Japan, and is shortly going to Spain to work in an international school in Barcelona. Seventeen students appeared. Most questions were asked by Nori, Shiro, Mayumi, and Miyuki. One student appears for first time since the very first lesson. As usual, girls ask more (sensible) questions than boys. No comments when I asked them to say something about *my* lessons. Two students revealed that they've been abroad—to Nevada and New Zealand.

5th July. Thirteen students. We watched a video of an NHK television documentary introducing Shinichiro Hori and his school Kinokuni Children's Village and they read a profile in Japanese of Hori. Mayumi arrives just as the video is ending. However, she says she would like to see some of the video. She had a part-time job and then had lunch with a friend, which made her late, she says. I let her stay and see about 10 minutes after the others have gone. One student turns up after a six week absence—says he's been looking for jobs as he's a fourth year.

29th September. First lesson after the summer break. We translate two pieces by Shinichiro Hori on learning and on Neill taken from my M.A. thesis, in which I interviewed Hori at some length.

4th October. We watch a video of television news reports on Kinokuni and then a new video about the school made by the Kinokuni children. Then we read two handouts on 'The Free Child' and 'Activities at Kinokuni' by Hori.

11th October. Following the video of last week, the students (fourteen of them) had a 'discussion' in groups about the differences and similarities between Kinokuni and Summerhill. One student writes scathing condemnation of Kinokuni as "not free" because of high cost of going there. Some quotes from an ex-Summerhillian from Japan named Azumi were translated and commented upon. Her view of Japanese education and society is extremely critical. Hideki comments that her ideas are good but adds, "I can't find any woman like that around here." However, Nori (who previously thought Neill was not unlike Shoko Asahara, the cult leader accused of murder) likens Azumi's ideas to the Holocaust. He feels that Neill wanted to smash society and that very different ideas like his can be "dangerous." Striking differences in opinions of the men and the women. Women seem to see things in a much wider social perspective. Only a few men try to see things in broader perspective: Nori (though very conservative), Shiro, Naga sometimes.

Sent some of my students' written comments to Shinichiro Hori for him to read. He replied that it made him very depressed and that it shows the "failure of Japanese education."

18th October. Today the students listened to a 20 minute radio programme which I had taped of Hori being interviewed shortly before the opening of Kinokuni over two years ago. Then they listened to short interviews I had done at Kinokuni with two of the children and with Hiroko, a teacher. One or two were sleepy (male students, of course) but most seemed interested and wrote comments afterwards.

25th October. Introduction to Homer Lane. Three items were planned but the second one (amazingly) developed into a better—or at least lengthier—discussion than I could have hoped for so the third activity was postponed until next week.

A rather lengthy Lane profile was read in English by me and by some of the students. I explained difficult words in Japanese. Then the anecdote from *Talks to Parents and Teachers* concerning the rabbit and the dog or the difference between 'creative' and 'possessive' happiness was read. This was done in two parts with a complete Japanese translation from the book given to the students fairly quickly. In groups they then discussed in Japanese what they thought about it. Many of them, naturally, thought it was all very similar to Neill. Two of the men, Nori and his partner Akifumi had a more conservative view and thought that "restrictions" were good for children because the process of fighting against them could in itself lead to happiness. Also, they thought that children who had complete freedom would do nothing. This was a fairly predictable response but still depresses me. Later, Nori came on the train with me some of the way home and continued to give his opinions. He thinks that because adults have more experience they are therefore better qualified to make the rules for children.

In class, Mayumi came up with the interesting point that the dog from the story who was 'creatively happy' chasing the rabbit, was the same as the bully in the Japanese school who torments his victim. A good point. It shows that Lane doesn't develop his theories very much, or very logically, perhaps. I told her that we must think differently about animals and people—the dog cannot help his instincts and is genuinely happy to chase another animal. However, people have the ability to think and reflect so cannot be happy doing something which is obviously wrong.

Sent another lot of students' comments to Hori—the ones made after they had listened to his radio interview and to my interviews with Kinokuni students and staff. He replied that these comments are much better "which shows that you have been succeeding in letting them (your students) become relieved from their fixed ideas about education and schooling."

8th November. Today followed a similar pattern to the last lesson. First we read four short quotes about Lane from Neill and David Wills. They translated and then read the translations I had already prepared. After this the students read a lengthy description of the Little Commonwealth from Lane's *Talks*—they were given both the English and Japanese versions to make things easier. Then in groups they discussed. Nori's group (rather predictably) did not much like the idea of the Little Commonwealth. Perhaps I am not making as much progress as Hori likes to think, as Nori told me that Totsuka Sailing School (where the harsh regime led to the deaths of four students) could probably be judged to be as successful as Lane's reformatory in making people better! I was fairly speechless at this suggestion. However, my job is not to indoctrinate students with my own opinions so let him off quite lightly.

After the lesson three students—Miyuki, Mayumi, and Tomoko—came with me to see one of the professors in the Education department and we all went out together for something to eat and drink. On Sunday there will be a party at my house for those students who want or are able to come. Passed a list around and ten students signed up for the party. Katsu appeared in class today for the first time in several weeks. Gave him a paper showing the need for 50% attendance, to which he did not comment.

12th November. Party at my house. eleven students came. One of them was Toshi who had written the most vitriolic criticism of Kinokuni a few weeks ago and then failed to attend any more lessons. He seemed quite shy. The usual women were there—Miyuki, Mayumi, Tomoko, Shiori, Momoe, Takako, plus Nori, Akifumi, Kaoru, Yosuke, Toshi. A good time seemed to be had by all.

15th November. The third and final session on Homer Lane. This time they read a summary of his basic principles and some short quotes about him. Then the story of Jason and the gold watch (in both English and Japanese). This time I didn't bother to make them read any of this long account in English as I thought the most important thing is for them to learn about the story.

They then discussed in groups. Thirteen students: Akifumi came late, half way through the lesson as usual. He's always cheerful and lively. Nori, unusually, didn't turn up today, so no strong criticisms of radical ideas were forthcoming.

22nd November. Lesson on 'Two British Schools Influenced by Neill.' Sands and Kilquhanity. They read, in English, a piece about Sands by David Gribble, then, in Japanese, a lengthy description by John Aitkenhead about his school, Kilquhanity. After this they watched a thirty-minute video taken at Kilquhanity by Hori two years ago, and finally wrote comments for me. Thirteen students. Two of them slept intermittently through the video (both male students, of course). Mayumi flicked through a book by Dewey during the video and said later that the video was not quite so interesting because it was mostly just "children playing." Miyuki wondered in what ways Kilquhanity was different from Summerhill. Nori asked if at Kilquhanity there were no lessons—"like Summerhill." I told him that there were indeed lessons at both schools. I think that, like many of the students, he imagines that because the learning is not occurring while the children are seated at desks it does not constitute lessons. Sometimes I seem to be making great progress in helping the students to understand these new—for them—ideas, then I get responses like this which seem to show that they still have a way to go in order to get away from old ideas of what is learning.

29th November. Wilhelm Reich. The next two lessons will be on 'two important psychologists' (or former psychologists)—Reich and Alice Miller. Today they read in English a profile I made up of Reich and then two pieces in Japanese. The first of these was an explanation of bio-energy, the other was Denis Hoerner's article about the relationship between Reich and Neill. After this they discussed in groups. Then they looked at the introduction to *Listen, Little Man!* and the cartoons and slogans of Reich, which I'd put together on a handout. Not much reaction. Mostly they found the whole idea rather difficult for one lesson only. It also occurred to me that this is rather more to do with psychology than education—in its narrower sense anyway. Reich is important, however, as an influence on Neill and for his views on 'self-regulation', in the same way that Lane is important for 'self-government'. No one was really prepared to venture an answer to the question of whether there actually was such a thing as bio-energy. Including perhaps myself. Finally, I asked them to draw their own Reich-style pictures and give them captions—either to do with their own lives at the university or their general view of life. This suggestion was greeted at first with some surprise and amusement. However, almost all the students attempted it, and with some enthusiasm.

Interestingly perhaps, the students—even Nori—seemed more ready to accept Reich as a serious thinker than Lane. Probably because Reich's work is presented as scientific research, whereas Lane's is more anecdotal. This appeals more to the serious-minded Japanese.

6th December. A lesson on Alice Miller. This completes the second of two classes vaguely based around psychology and child-rearing. An Asahi Shimbun newspaper article about Miller was read by students as an introduction and then they read and tried to understand/translate four quotes from her book *For Your Own Good.* However, one of the quotes, though appearing in her book, was not by her but by Hitler. They guessed fairly easily which was the 'odd one out'. Then they had to decide in groups (there were fourteen students in class today) who had written it. After the expected silence I prompted an answer by giving them a multiple choice activity on the board. They had to choose between five possible authors of the piece, which was about the need for harsh discipline: John Dewey, Margaret Thatcher, Mariah Carey (American singer and favourite of most students I seem to teach), Abraham Lincoln, and Adolf Hitler. Twelve of the students choose Hitler correctly, but two of them went for Thatcher! Not that much difference I suppose. (And the two who chose Thatcher were two of my best students—Miyuki and Mayumi). Finally, they were given the choice to read in English or Japanese (so Japanese for everyone), a lengthy extract giving Miller's basic ideas about child-rearing, point by point. Nori, to his credit, did try to read the English version as well after finishing the Japanese one. Then they wrote generally sympathetic comments about Miller, except for Nori who—while stating to me that he thought Miller was right—nevertheless wrote that he thought there was basically nothing wrong with strict discipline "as long as both sides understand the reason for it".

13th December. The last lesson before New Year. So I gave them a copy of part of the chapter I wrote for the book *Gakko to iu Kosaten* which criticizes Japanese education and also compares it with British education. They read it and were then supposed to discuss and write comments or ask questions. They didn't really have enough time to do all this. Only two students wrote anything: that they were surprised both about British primary schools (presumably because much freer) and that some Japanese Summerhill parents send their children to *juku* (cram schools) in the holidays. Mayumi queried the fact that I had written that childhood should not be a preparation for future life (after all she's read, even from Dewey!). She thinks that "children cannot live forever in a child's life." She may write to me about this to explain herself better, she says. Nori asked me one question and spent a great deal of time writing and marking the handout I gave him.

Just one more meeting now, on 10th January, when I hope to be able to collect all their homework papers. These are known in Japan as 'reports'. As a final piece of work I have asked the students to write something about anything they have learned about in this course with the only stipulation that it must be from their own point of view and with their own opinions. It should be very brief, perhaps two pages at most.

10th January. Almost all students, amazingly, turned up on the last lesson to hand in their 'reports'. Two of them—Katsu and Hiroko—were making very rare appearances indeed, while Mitsuno was there for the first time since before last summer. Despite my prompting, she did not reveal the reason for her long absence. Two students (Hiroko was one of them) had not finished their reports so I gave them my address and asked them to post them to me. One student who should have been there wasn't, so I'll have to wait and see if he sends me his report. However, I'm quite surprised that more students weren't missing. Obviously they are more used to being judged by reports than by attendances. Some students said they wanted to go for coffee with me so we went to a nearby cafe after class.

The Students' Reports

All students chose to write their reports in Japanese. Below are the English translations of what they wrote. The only parts missing are referred to in italics.

Tomoko:

I remembered most about Neill and Summerhill. I agree with the meeting and self-government because it's a good thing for children to get together and talk. In Japan most rules are full of prejudice and made by adults. Children are forced to keep them. I just went to university without thinking. I wondered many times why I had to have such a hard time preparing for entrance exams. Neill's idea of respect for every child is most important but if this is to come to Japan we need almost revolutionary change. I wonder what can I do as an individual?

Shiori:

Reich and Bio-energy *(She then describes Reich's life and the concept of bio-energy.).* I saw a film called 'Gaia Symphony.' This is about nature and human beings and their connection. I was very interested in it. First, I think everything is connected, and human beings are part of nature. We are all born on Earth. I can feel through this the life inside of us because we humans are getting knowledge and making our lives comfortable. We misunderstand about being one with nature. But I think we all live in nature. Everyone has the life energy, the same as in the universe. Why can't we have more fun and be more relaxed? If we can we could have a better life. I learned a more casual and better way of life from your lessons.

Hiroko:

The most impressive thing was the teacher's personality. Also, I learned about education, especially Summerhill and Kinokuni. Sorry I was ill in the second term so I missed many lessons.

Yosuke:

The most impressive thing was Kinokuni—the articles and video. Respect for children's ideas is wonderful but very difficult to do in Japan. The party at the teacher's house was good.

Hideki:

I was most interested in Kinokuni and Summerhill. I was very surprised at the Summerhill video. At first I thought how can they learn? Also, it was in English so difficult to understand. Young children were smoking. Then I saw the Kinokuni video—no subjects were taught because they learned from real life. At first I thought this is impossible, but then I found they learned even more—this shocked me even more. It is more useful than ordinary schools. In the future I want to visit Kinokuni.

Masato:

The most interesting was Summerhill. Even in Japan, although there is talk about respecting children, nothing happens. Everyone believes in Japan that you must score high on tests to enter the right school or university or your life is a failure—my parents are probably the same. I am a Ronin. *(Someone who has* *tried more than once to enter university and so is slightly older than most other students).* Through this experience I realize that there are many different ways; you can learn more through taking time. I know what I want to do, but many of my friends at Kansai University don't know. Enjoying every day is better than worrying about the future. This is the good thing about Summerhill and Kinokuni. If Japanese education can go this way then Japan will be a better country.

Mitsuno:

I learned a lot about free schools, which, I think, are better than ordinary schools. Individuality, freedom and licence is important. At my high school I thought our festival was good because it was run by the students. But even this was in fact organized mainly by adults. Experiential learning was also very interesting and good to learn about. Sitting at a desk does not help you to remember anything. I was very surprised that the Ministry of Education recognized Kinokuni. Not all education in Japan is bad because we have better lives, it is true, since the Second World War, but why can't we now think more about 'spiritual' education instead of just the material?

Takako:

The most interesting was Kinokuni. I was surprised about Summerhill but even more surprised about Kinokuni. The videos were good—we learned more through watching them. I decided to study Kinokuni for my seminar on my own. The best thing was the project work at Kinokuni. Living in school I'm not so sure about because education at home is almost as important as at school. The ideal situation would be for there to be many schools in Japan like Kinokuni so children can go there from home. Now I think after children leave school they should do anything they like—all occupations are equally important, and going to university is not so important as I had thought.

Momoe:

I can't remember much now about the differences between Neill and Dewey that we learned about. But from the middle of the course it became very interesting because we learned about free schools. There must be many problems too in these schools—e.g., living away from home, bullying. I wonder if the problem of bullying can be solved in a free school? Apart from these problems I think that these schools are wonderful. I have forgotten everything I learned in my own school days because I only learned in order to pass entrance exams. There should be more schools like Summerhill and Kinokuni so that children can go there from home.

Mayumi:

I learned about many ideas and philosophers that I didn't know about before, though I wonder how much I really understood. After reading *That Dreadful School* by Neill I understood more. *(She then explains about this book's ideas. I had lent her my copy of the Japanese translation of this book during the course).* I don't really like children much. I think that children have characters which are partly cold and cruel. Why do we have to divide it all into adults and children? At first I was surprised about this lesson because the teacher remembered most of the students' names. This never happened before in my university life. Also, you didn't stand at the front of the class but learned together with us.

Yusuke:

I was especially interested in Kilquhanity. I was surprised that it began during the war. In the wartime the government tried hard in Japan to do things for the country. In this situation John Aitkenhead wanted to make a free school. I felt he must be very strongminded. I was almost moved by the process in this school. Learning from doing impressed me. Schools in Japan just have sitting at desks, listening to the teacher, copying from the board. This is just like factory work. I wonder how much children can learn from that kind of work. So learning from doing was impressive. The idea in Japanese school is that you learn first, and then after that you practice it. Maybe the Japanese character is the reason for this situation, because Japanese people are so eager to do everything perfectly so this stops learning from doing. I think you can learn more things from doing and it's more useful. Modern education wants children to do too many unimportant things. When I think about my school days I wonder how much of it I can use in society now. I doubt if I can do much. This is almost killing people's personalities. Individuality should be respected so there must be more schools like Kilquhanity and Kinokuni in order to change society.

Hiroshi:

I learned about a lot of different kinds of education from different countries. A lot of things surprised me. I was surprised that some schools were based on freedom and the results were very good. Because this kind of education was the opposite to the kind of education I had. I was impressed with the Summerhill meeting because adults and children got together to discuss things. This is good for psychological growth. Another surprising thing was that children don't have to go to lessons. I think you can't learn anything if you are reluctant. Another surprising thing is that Summerhill has been going on for a long time. In Japan I'm not sure if Kinokuni will be a success or not. Kinokuni is a model of Summerhill but they can make their own school, though I want Kinokuni to stick in the Summerhill spirit. We have no tradition to change things so radically in Japan so I hope that Kinokuni can wait until people understand them. From this lesson I realized that these schools are good schools, so I think even in Japan this kind of school will be a success sometime. Myself, I want to be a teacher so I want to go to Kinokuni sometime to look around. When I'm a teacher I want to respect every child, as I learned from this course.

Toshi:

At the beginning I thought you were going to tell us about the differences between Japan and other countries. In fact, the lesson was about A.S. Neill so I didn't find it interesting. However, when it became more detailed about Summerhill then I became more interested.

In Japan, if schools are not controlled by adults and are freer or like Summerhill you can talk more and express yourself. Some children cannot go to high school because they're not good enough but some can't go because they can't fit into school. In Japan if you don't go to high school you can rarely succeed. When I was a first year university student I worked as a private tutor in my spare time. I taught second year junior high school students. One student couldn't go to high school because he couldn't do simple maths unless he wrote it down. I assumed he didn't like study so I tried to make him have a purpose to go to high school. But when I gave him a little homework he didn't do it and couldn't ever get any better. If I taught him in a very strict way, maybe he could have gone to high school. I don't necessarily think going to high school is a good thing but this student's life in the future will become narrow. I was not sure how much freedom I could give him.

At Summerhill you become a better person but not necessarily better at tests. I learned that since I went to university. When I think about myself, before university I never really played but since then I have become a person who likes to organize lots of things like discos and events. I really learned how important the relationship between people is. Nobody taught me this in school. I think education is both—personality and academic things. There is a need to teach children both.

Yoshi:

I never even thought that there could be a school life like that at Summerhill. I imagined they must be school dropouts. I was wrong. I want to make some points about Summerhill. On self-government: they talk about things outside of the class. When they decide they do it democratically. Compared to my school I think there is no school, or even movement, to make things like that. After I read about it I wondered what the Summerhill people do now who left? In Japan you have a very narrow choice of job if you drop out in any way. But when I think about ex-Summerhillians, if you compare them to so-called élite people, it seems like they have a confidence and they don't care about other people's opinions of them. They seem proud to be Summerhillians. As I wrote before, Summerhill is a school where children are at the centre and they very rarely have any suggestions stopped by adults. This means they are very independent and democratic. In that sense, Summerhill students seem better than Japanese students. In the last few years in Japan people have started talking about individuality. There are a lot of companies and universities who want independent people, so they use an exam for this. In that sense, even in Japan, we have some possibility to have a school like Summerhill. We need schools like Summerhill all over the world, I feel.

Takashi:

The most memorable thing was Kinokuni. It's difficult because each child must think what they should do. So they have a lot of lessons outside. So lessons in the classroom are always just something extra. Kinokuni is very different in Japan so I was quite shocked.

Next I'd like to say some good and bad points about Kinokuni rather than evaluating it. The best thing is that the children are quite free and they use learning from finding out. I'm not really against this but Kinokuni reminds me of something they tried to do just after the war, but they had the problem that maybe you can have more interested children but a lot of things are too much to do with life, so this dismisses the learning. For me a better way to teach children is to try to find the fundamental thing first from a text book. Question and answer kind of learning I recommend. Also, I can hardly believe that schools like Kinokuni will increase. Because I think that Kinokuni cannot produce highly talented students compared to other schools. But the good thing about it is that our education system is concerned too much about academic standards so a school like Kinokuni will give people a little hope. Finally, I'd like to talk about my ideal education. I want to be idealistic but my idea is very realistic so I support teacher-directed lessons. I think it is important to help each child to be an individual, but within the group. And a very important thing is to make children become very enthusiastic, so I think that the teacher should give every single student something to do which is very important for them. The teacher shouldn't keep a distance from the student, they should be close. There are various ways to do this. Teachers should learn from students.

Nori:

I couldn't find a perfectly logical way to argue with you about the Summerhill idea in which children's individuality comes first and they can do whatever they want. I have been comparing Summerhill's idea to the present education system in Japan. I tried to disagree with you and sometimes I was a little bit nasty to you. But I couldn't win the argument. This doesn't mean though that I agree 100%. There are still some things I won't be sure about until I go to Summerhill to see with my own eyes. So I'm going to write some points which are in my head.

First, at Summerhill they think children have no need to prepare for the future. On this point, I think that adults are faced with the real situation every day, they have to look after children and make a better life. But children don't have to think like that so sometimes they become like daydreamers. In that sense I think it is very natural for adults to ask children to think about those problems and to prepare for the future.

Secondly, human beings cannot live on their own, they always have something to do with society. When you think about that, can you be part of a group and fit in with society? Also, can you obey the customs of this group? If you deny this you will be put out of the group. This is not going to help you. If you are outside the group, will you have any energy to try to change the situation? I wonder if a lot of them will become like old soldiers who are only able to think about the good old days.

Thirdly, this kind of school (Summerhill) seems like a paradise for children, but parents have to work every day to send their children to paradise. They work every day in hell—the total opposite to paradise. So adults work in hell to protect paradise and also life for their children. I wonder what this paradise is for, because the child will become a parent and will enter hell. I wonder if everyone who has been to this paradise will get a job which is not in hell. Fourthly, the idea of goodness. When children cannot do things they really want they get angry. If those children tried to be clever and convince people of their own opinions this is good. However, the opposite is that children just want to enforce any rules. Summerhill is more likely to produce this bad kind of child who denies all rules and won't even argue. I'm still not sure about the difference between freedom and licence. And I'm not sure what kind of people are produced by Summerhill. But, as I always think, educationalists are the most cowardly people about education so in that sense I really respect Neill because he tried to do something totally new.

You have been showing us videos, books, and also made us discuss in groups. You used a lot of different ways of teaching. I really enjoyed it. I assume you had some difficulty to make us understand because we've been taught to be quiet and also not to be different from others.

Shiro:

In the lesson I had before, the teacher just gave knowledge to the students—more like giving an injection. Nowadays there are a lot of schools that try to do things a different way. This makes me think they probably give some thought to how can children live happily. Also, Neill said children are basically good. This is very important, because if it is not true then completely relying on children should never happen. Neill used the expression that children shouldn't fit the school, the school should fit the child. I really liked that expression because it shows that he is completely on the side of the child. This child-centred idea is really from Summerhill so it seems that the children there have no fear and are not intense. They are free from complexes often given by parents and teachers. When I think about being free from fear, in the video I was really surprised at nude bathing. I was almost envious that these children were liberated mentally. Neill tried to take any complex away from children to let them be much freer. As I experienced it in junior high school and high school, you become depressed about little things and so I think Neill's idea is very good.

Another good thing is the meeting at Summerhill. This never happens at other schools. Self-government, as Neill said, is really valuable. You need this experience in order to live in a democracy. Another important point is that children and teachers have equal rights. This means that children are respected as individual human beings. Another surprising thing is that at Summerhill you don't have to go to lessons if you don't want to. But if most of them didn't go to lessons I wonder what would happen? And have they got the basic academic skills? Because one of the most important things is that you learn things. On the other hand, if you think about school refusers, those people won't exist at Summerhill because they don't have any pressure to go to lessons. I hope this kind of school will increase in Japan but of course it is very difficult because the centre of education is still exam preparation. If we want to change something we have to change the idea of entrance exams being the most important thing.

Naga:

I learned a lot of things. The most impressive was Kinokuni. I went to an ordinary Japanese school so Kinokuni was very surprising for me. Their project work is equivalent to lessons in ordinary schools but also this project doesn't include homework and also no one is forced to go to lessons. I was even more surprised about this. I felt the children were more lively and happier than at other schools. But one question came into my mind. This was that maybe ordinary school children know more academically than Kinokuni children. But then I realized that you can't do project work without knowing a lot of things and the children learn things every time they do project work. Perhaps sometimes younger children know something that even older children in an ordinary school don't know. Perhaps there is not such a big gap between Kinokuni children and ordinary schoolchildren. The meetings at Kinokuni seem better. I was surprised there is a school like this in Japanese society. Kinokuni has shown us one way to go.

Katsu:

Homer Lane, who Neill got most influence from, started the Little Commonwealth in England. It was recognized for problem children. I was surprised they ran the Little Commonwealth by themselves. Neill learned from Lane to be on the side of the child.

I think those children understood Lane's feeling. I was quite doubtful about children's independence before, because I thought that children were only like half-adults, not fully developed, so they needed adults for control. I even thought, if children don't listen to adults they can't become good adults. But since I found out about the Little Commonwealth I understand that children can fully develop without adults giving them rules. The idea that children are half-adult is a very conservative, egoistic idea from adults. When I see education and schools in Japan, where study comes first, I think there's almost no opportunity for children to learn about the relationship between themselves and society and individuality. I wonder how many teachers or adults trust children completely. I often see parents treating their own children like accessories. I cannot avoid feeling depressed to live in such a society.

Akifumi:

I learned something about some different kinds of schools in this class. The kind of schools which are very different from the ones in Japan. (Apart from Kinokuni). Those schools make freedom and individuality the most important thing for children. Their existence is enough to make people think about what education should be. But I grew up in schools in which there were already a lot of rules and the relationships between children and adults were not equal. So I wonder if there are some problems.

First, if any trouble happens can the children always sort it out in the best way? And secondly, when they decide by voting in a democratic way, what do they do about minorities? These two things I thought about. Even so, especially a school like Summerhill which has been going on for more than seventy years, I have to say it's a wonderful thing. Also, I think they probably have had a lot of trouble in order to keep the school in existence. I have to say that Kinokuni will probably have a hard time before people will accept it. Because there are still many, many more people who agree with the education system of the present. Also, some people are probably too much concerned about children's further education.

One thing I can say is that Kinokuni definitely makes people think about education again, whether they accept it or not. The new type of schools I learned about in this class made me change my image of school and influenced my idea of education too.

Two students did not write reports. Miyuki, the extra student who joined our class because of her interest in education *was not required to submit one. Kaoru did not hand in a report.*

Afterword:

In this course I began by introducing Neill and then Dewey. This was mainly because, although not obviously connected, their ideas—the emotional and the intellectual—had been recently gathered together in Japan by Shinichiro Hori in his experimental Kinokuni school, which we subsequently investigated. This part took over half of the course. Later work included reading something of Homer Lane, Wilhelm Reich and Alice Miller, as well as finding out about two more British schools: Sands and Kilquhanity. Several things I had intended to cover were left out because of lack of time, but this was a learning year for me too.

In general many of the students seemed to go through three stages during the course. At first a number of them expressed non-conformist attitudes towards education and the men especially seemed to enjoy the idea of being 'rebels.' However, once they began learning about the radical nature of many of the philosophies they encountered on the course they tended to become much more cautious and conservative. Finally, many students came around to a positive outlook towards schools like Summerhill and Kinokuni which at first had surprised, or even shocked them. The attitude of Nori who remained largely unconvinced of the value of freedom in education was a minority one. (Nori, it should be mentioned, was a good student who, despite our very different views, always participated fully in the class and was a very welcome member.)

However, the apparent acceptance of many of these ideas, which were completely new for most students, should also be treated with caution as many fundamental attitudes were probably not changed. In particular, ideas of what constitutes 'learning' were difficult for them as the strong emphasis on rote learning, memory, and the gathering of information in their own school experiences in Japan were hard to shake off. Twenty-two lessons over a period of a few months (especially when many of those lessons are skipped) is insufficient to do more than give a taste of different ways in education to the students. And the purpose of the course was to make them think about these ideas intelligently rather than to steamroller their acceptance. That their responses generally became so positive is encouraging for alternatives in education.

The instances of absenteeism and occasional sleepiness in class from some students is not so unusual in Japanese higher education and is not treated very seriously by many involved in it. What was most interesting for me was the division in the sexes. Men and women not only sitting separately in class but appearing to have quite different ways of responding to the ideas put forward in the course. With some exceptions, the women were more interested in and were also much more receptive to progressive and radical ideas. They were also more likely to see things in a wider context and were more critical of their own schooling and society. In partial explanation could it not be that women in Japanese society, being under less pressure to 'succeed' in what is still a male-dominated world, are able to assess things more objectively? Men, under severe pressure to do well and to accept the status quo are less likely to want to overturn the society in which they hope to succeed.

The main books we read from were as follows:

Dewey, John. *Experience and Education*. 1938. New York: Collier Books, 1963.

Lane, Homer. *Talks to Parents and Teachers*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1928.

Miller, Alice. *For Your Own Good: The Roots of Violence in Child-rearing*. British edition. London: Virago Press, 1987.

Neill, A.S. *The New Summerhill*. Ed. Albert Lamb. Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1992.

Reich, Wilhelm. *Listen, Little Man!* Hammondsworth: Pelican, 1975.

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Here follow three reports of alternative education conferences—one in Japan, one in Bloomington, Indiana. and a third in Israel. The first, by Sandy Hurst, director of Upattinas Resource Center in Glenmoore, Pennsylvania, is a reprint from the spring (1996) issue of the National Coalition of Alternative Schools Newsletter. *I believe there are a number of reasons for reprinting these reports here—not the least of which is a "networking" function, as Jerry Mintz has been teaching us by publishing his AERO newsletter and now his new* Directory of Alternative Schools. *See page 65 for Em's catalogue of resources, and pages 71-72 for a fuller list of names and addresses. We need to know that good thinking and planning are going on in many non-intersecting contexts, and that alternative education is alive and well in both countries, lest we lose hope!*

Sandy Hurst has been the heart and soul of both Upattinas School (now the Upattinas Resource Center) and the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (NCACS), which she has served as president and board member for more than two decades. She also started an alternative teacher training program a few years ago which she tells me is going strong, and always has a group of Japanese interns living and working at her Center. She has written several articles for ΣΚΟΛΕ and helped us launch our new quarterly, the Journal of Family Life *with a generous donation.*

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE IN JAPAN

by Sandy Hurst, Upattinas Resource Center

It is truly an interesting experience to be a non-native speaker at an alternative education conference in another country. In August, 1995, I was invited to be a speaker at the conference held in the Osaka area for the alternative educators of central Japan.

The first session of the conference was held in a hotel in Osaka, where a panel of educators made speeches about their particular interests.

It was during the speech by Ikue Tezuka, whom we had met at the Hawaii Conference for Holistic Education, that I became aware for the second time in my life of the power of communication without understanding the language. Although Atsuhiko Yoshido tried to translate for me, it was too distracting during the speech, so I just listened as well as I could. As Ikue spoke I had the sense that she was making the speech I would have made—the one in which I try to emphasize the importance of caring for the children—all the children of the world. Later I learned that she had, indeed, made my speech. The emotion and connection between us continued into the rest of the conference. Later I was describing this connection to a professional translator who translated my speech the next day. She said that she had sometimes been present to translate when two people made such a connection and she had realized that they were communicating quite adequately without the need for having words translated. What a magical moment!

After the afternoon speeches the whole group traveled by various means to a temple between Osaka and Kyoto where the conference continued for the next two days. It was in a beautiful area high on the side of a mountain, which gave us a breeze and some relief from the intense heat and humidity of an unusually hot summer in Japan. We all slept on futons in a tatami mat room—sounds unbearable. but I never felt closed in. Japanese people have a way of being very clean, quiet, and separate when they are in close quarters—from which we could learn.

We shared the evening with a group of people who had been traveling on the international peace march from Auschwitz to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was fascinating and heart-rending to hear their stories and to be among them as they began to say good-bye to their friends. We were surprised to meet Frank Houde, whom we met years ago at his boatshop in Albany, just beside the Free School.

Frank joined me in my speech the next morning to describe the Free School and how our two schools are different but still part of the same movement in the United States. It is amazing to me how similar the questions and concerns of the Japanese are to those of an American audience. The key concerns translate to freedom vs. license; responsibility to poor children; teaching children to be able to do well in the "real world" without putting too much pressure on them.

The most pressing issue for these educators was that of finding a means of getting funding from the government. They asked me many questions about how our schools are funded and were very interested in the point of view many of us hold that we do not want funds from the government because of the strings attached. They hope to by-pass that as a problem if they can only get a real hearing. It is very different there because any public funding they got would be from the national government, not the province or state, as it would be here.

Another interesting conversation we had during the conference was with Satoshi Fujita, a college professor from Tokyo, about the current situation of school refusers in Japan. He describes school refusers as students whose physical bodies will not allow them to go to school because they know how bad it is for them. He feels that these students usually want to go and feel that they should, but they cannot do it. This makes it sound somewhat like what we describe as school phobia. The government schools are now allowing these students to go to school whenever they want to and are kept on the rolls of the school. This seems to save face for all and it is hoped that eventually the children will return to school. Of course, at junior high school level, this would preclude passing the exams for most students unless they were schooled at home, which is a growing trend.

The myth prevails both in the US and Japan that all Japanese children work hard and do well in school and that they are never defiant or indifferent. When I had occasion to talk with the American Consul in charge of the Visa Section in Tokyo I truly shocked him by telling him that more that 80,000 young people in Japan are not in school and will not go. He did not believe in their society if it were so. Having known many such Japanese students, I know that they, like their American counterparts, can and do go on to become happy, prosperous citizens.

It was fun at this conference to join in the kitchen and clean-up duties just as everyone does at our Coalition conferences. It's a good opportunity to learn Japanese cooking first-hand, and a place where one does not need a translator to know what to do. Again, this is an opportunity to talk without knowing the language and to be understood in a magical way.

As always, I was struck by the kindness of the people and their recognition of our plight as the only non-Japanese speakers in the group. Everyone tried to help us understand what was happening and what to do. We especially appreciated the thoughtfulness of Kuniko Kato, who made sure we were taken care of even though she was very busy with planning and executing this conference.

Our original reason for going to Japan was to spend time with our friends and former students at Nomugi School in Yokohama. We visited their new school, where the Higuchi family lives. Their mountain school in Nagano was destroyed by a mud slide during the floods just the week before we arrived. Their graciousness and kindness during such a trying time was wonderful.

For those of you who have hosted these students at your schools, you may be pleased to know that many of our former students came to greet us and to help us tour the area. It was truly gratifying to meet them as they have grown up and to give them a chance to show their appreciation for what all of you did for them. Unfortunately, it seems to take a long time for this realization to occur, but I am reminded that this is true for many of our American students, too. And they don't have to break a language barrier.

Nomugi School has an interesting program. They have added "The Academy for Peace"—an opportunity for students to stay with the school for two years after they graduate. Several students board together in a near-by apartment building and come to the school daily to discuss and study with an emphasis on working towards international peace and the cessation of nuclear weaponry. These students also help with the younger students in the school. A few have actually been hired as staff members.

It is our hope that next year some of the Nomugi staff will be able to come to the US to join our conference and visit some schools. Because of the expense of the loss of their mountain school, that will probably have to be put off until 1997.

Other Highlights

It is always a pleasure to visit in the home of Dayle and Myoko Bethel, who have moved to Kyoto. While there we met two of Dayle's students, one of whom took us for a delightful walk to some of the sights of the area. Our discussions there were centered around the importance of deep ecology and sustainability in education as well as the implications of corporate and governmental violence, especially as it applies to the violence in schools today. Dayle remains optimistic and believes that the word is getting out, so that we may be on the verge of a 'hundredth monkey" phenomenon of understanding. I truly hope that he is right.

We also enjoyed spending time with Junji Horikawa, Yasuhiro Matsuuta, and his girlfriend, Yoko, and Takahisa Nagai, a former student, who took us on a whirlwind tour of some of the most important sights of Kyoto. It's fun to experience such places with people who know them. This also was the case with Keiko Yamashita of the Planet School as we walked around the area where she grew up and were treated to a tea ceremony prepared by her mother.

It would take this whole newsletter to adequately describe our experience in Japan, but I must include the profound experience of visiting Kobe, where we made our home during our last trip to Japan in 1992. We met Kazu Kojima and visited Kiichi's sister Keiko's coffee shop—still there, except for the loss of the apartment upstairs where she had lived.

People there are still living in tents and temporary structures, afraid to begin to rebuild because the government seems to be deciding to tear down the whole area to be replaced with high rise business buildings. This, of course, means that the poor and old people who lost their homes and business will have to re-locate and start all over again in a new neighborhood. It is their contention that there would not have been nearly so much damage had the government heeded the warnings and caused structures such as highways to be built more carefully. It was incredibly sad to see the devastation and frustration of the people. But they are very supportive of each other and Kiichi is giving his all to help those in need. He lost his ju-ku (after school), but has opened in another place and will continue.

Once again we are most grateful to Kazuhiro Kojima, our international representative to the NCACS Board, for his hosting us and guiding us much of the time. It was fun to have a week of touring to ourselves, but reassuring to know that Kazu was available at least by phone to advise us and often to accompany us as we traveled.

Yes, it is expensive to be in Japan. And it's almost unbearably hot in summer in the cities. But the rewards are great and the people could not be more kind and caring anywhere in the world, at least those who live their lives as we do, somewhere on the edge of international community—and Dayle Bethel is right: connection is just around the corner.

A BOLD RESPONSE TO "GOALS 2000"
AND THE NATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION

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FEAR AND TREMBLING AT THE INTERNATIONAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE, JUNE 29-JULY 2, 1995, BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

by Emanuel Pariser, Co-Director of the Community School, Camden, Maine

When We Stop Offending Each Other, We Stop Learning.
—Lucy Matos, Central Park East

Along with being the home to the 25th (or was it the 26th?) anniversary of the first **International Alternative Education Conference**, Bloomington is the site of a great American movie— "Breaking Away," one of the few dramas to come out of Hollywood dealing directly and honestly with class issues. The protagonist is a "cutter"; son of a former Bloomington granite quarrier who now sells questionable used cars. Our "hero" is considering attending the University, and leaving his buddies who are destined for working class life. The plight of people at the losing end of the economic ladder, the "cutters" of the 1990's, permeated the conference. As **Bob Fizzell** noted in his Independent Study presentation, despite (or perhaps because of?) our technological and economic corporate successes, class issues have intensified and the disparity in earnings between rich and poor are greater than in any time in our history or anywhere else in the "first world."

The ensuing conference report comes with a disclaimer: despite the fact that the following perceptions and thoughts are purely my own, indeed, I surely attended a very different conference than anyone else; any relationship between the characters or incidents portrayed to real life is entirely intentional.

Battle of the Titans

As **Ed Nagel, National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools** chief of staff, wryly pointed out to me, general sessions of the conference were scrupulously non-alternative in design. The BIG PEOPLE sat in front on a stage; the attendees, critics, wanna-be big people, sat in rows facing them or wandered in late, or, ...wandered in even later.

As we entered that first session, I was struck by the low attendance—only 130 people or so had registered—and perhaps just 100 were there. The rest of you missed **Tom Gregory's** opening comments. An alternative education star in his own write, Tom helped to create the first of these conferences 25 (or was it 24?) years ago and was the primary planner and designer for this year's event.

In an interesting attempt to sketch one history of the alternative schools movement, "**The Old Farts Forum**" took a look at the development of the "Bloomington Group" who, led by **Bob Barr** and **Vern Smith,** ran a unique Teacher Education program that actually pushed for students to get involved in creating and teaching in alternative schools. Perhaps the idea of a historical forum was worthy—we should always be aware of our past even if it's not ours, but the OFF didn't capture what may have been intended.

Eight former students and professors related funny stories, hard stories, important stories which illustrated that our struggles now to survive as alternative school or educator are quite similar to struggles twenty-five years ago. Perhaps there are more of "us" now. Perhaps we have a track record now. Perhaps this hasn't made a visible difference to the Big Picture in which Ronald Reagan and his corporate and congressional friends were busy taking money out of the pockets of the middle and working-class and cramming it into the briefcases of the rich.

In the second general session, two "Titans," neither of them women or of a minority, started dueling. In fact hardly any women talked during the concurrent sessions and few people of color attended the conference this year. In fact, the "Titans" were both middle-aged, middle-class, white males. So what did they have to disagree about? Plenty.

Bob Barr and **John Gatto** are both prepossessing, large men of excellent oratorical abilities. And what did they fight about? On one side of the podium Barr, the Dean of the Education School in Boise, Idaho, sat, a "true believer" in Alternative Education. Since the beginning of his teaching career Barr has backed the effort to bring good education across America in the polymorphous forms which good teaching and good schools take. Coming back from a tour of good alternative programs, he and a colleague have written a book about what works.

As he began the forum his voice was hopeful and resonant. "There are good things going on out there," he said, "children are being saved. We know what works, we **can** change things around." Bob's cadence built. He was hopeful, inspired. This job **could** be done. However the subtext he alerted us to was alarming: funding for jails is up, funding for education is down; **for the first time in its history California is spending more money on corrections than education.** At the same time that Oregon has closed some of its State College system, it has funded a state of the art SuperMax prison. At the moment seems that the U.S. is paying for punishment over pedagogy. (A slogan? **pay for pedagogy or pay for punishment!**)

Responding angrily, Titan #2, self-titled education guerrilla and author of ***Dumbing us Down***, John Gatto, told us that he was ready to faint, but the chance to talk about how "government schooling" was destroying kids' lives revived him. Having taught in New York City for thirty years, and having been selected as teacher of the year twice, Gatto insisted that many alternative schools had a lack of intellectual rigor, and didn't take risks. He repudiated the idea that schools should have control over granting diplomas, and that they were a way "out" or an equalizer for the huddled masses, the homeless, the poor. In fact, he claimed that schooling was a huge industry designed to benefit the few and mighty who pulled strings from mostly New York-based foundations, that more money flowed into schools than the Pentagon. He suggested we consider the Oklahoma fertilizer solution.

Shooting out like little grenades, Gatto's words fell into an audience that was well-practiced at getting fired upon, but not at such close range, with so much vehemence, from a friend. As a gadfly John had done an exemplary job.

His passion, intelligence and delivery were engaging, if not enraging. Titan #1, Bob Barr, rejoindered angrily. He felt that John was irresponsible for suggesting violent solutions to the group. Somebody might act on it. In a sense, he and his hopeful message had been overshadowed; the larger frame which Gatto placed on education minimized change on the scale which Barr so spiritedly supported.

I no doubt missed complexities and aspects of both of these men's arguments, and am open to corrections (especially since there is so much money pouring into it these days). I also cannot review here the in-depth Gattovian view of educational history in the United States, which despite its reductionist tendencies is an education for anyone who wishes to follow it through. In my mind these arguments raised a perennial issue for me. By providing alternative education to a tiny percentage of students many of whom have been disgorged by "conventional" schools, as **Arnie Langberg** has named them, are we simply stabilizing a bigger, more repressive form of social control which keeps the poor, poor, the rich, rich, and those of us in between in our places? Has the great American dream of public education for all worked or has it never been implemented? Or was it a different dream? Whose dream was it?

Other Voices

Other voices insinuated themselves into the debate. Quieter, less riled, focused voices—those of the remaining panel members—**Lucy Matos** and **Arnie Langberg,** who chose not to jump into the fray. Responding to the issue of "what is an alternative school," Arnie mentioned that he liked the definition to be up to the individual school—if they said they were alternative, they were. It is better to include some "non-alternative" schools than to exclude any "real" alternatives. Aaaaah, Inclusion. What a concept. As he always does, Arnie projected an egalitarian air, making it clear that we're all in this together;, we can all help people in and out of public education refine and improve their work as educational "heroes."

Though she felt that some of J. Gatto's arguments had merit, Lucy Matos was definite that she wasn't about to throw her work over to take down the "government", or the system of public education which it supports. She liked her "messy" desk at Central Park East School, and the day-to-day "messy work" of helping students sort out their lives, and create a hopeful future.

I value these quieter voices, but I also value the heat and passion which Gatto and Barr brought to bear on the issues. Questions persist. Is there a big answer to the inequities that surround and pervade education? Are we wasting time in our tiny enclaves of good education? Where do we put our energies to most use?

Back to the Small Picture

My conference co-processor, **Andrée Quigley**—a "hero" in alternative education, works with adjudicated youth at **Middle Earth,** in Pennsylvania, which is a program designed as a last chance for students before full and final entry into the criminal justice system.

She felt many attendees had been bored by the general sessions which had engaged me and thought we needed more interaction, something more alternative, something which would encourage everyone to speak more. As one who ventured to the microphone to ask a question, I agree. It's generally intimidating to talk with Titans. We all survived, but I think the preponderance of engagers were of the male persuasion.

Andrée's work with people who have been jailed throughout the country, some for their politics, some for their color, connects the Barr/Gatto arguments by acknowledging the validity of both positions. Through her "literary salon," which includes friends and prisoners in a written discussion of articles, essays, literature, etc., through her involvement with the "School of Hard Knocks," which is an educational program created by lifers and concerned people on the "outside" to help youth "at-risk" stay out of jails, and through her advocacy of the "Books through Bars " program, that allows people to send prisoners requested reading material, Andrée is carrying on a human-sized, non-governmental, non-certified effort to right some of what is wrong in our culture and to further education in its truest sense.

Lots of Questions: Pondering the Imponderable

I am struck here by two themes in the alternative schools "movement." Exemplifying one train of thought are **the Gattos, the homeschoolers, the Summerhillites, the John Holts, the Ivan Illichs** who believe in "leave well enough alone"—people can teach themselves what they want to know, people are innately "good" and eager to learn. If we would just get out of the way of the learning process all would be well. The second theme exemplified by the **Kozols, the Ted Sizers, Debbie Meiers, Bob Barrs, the Herb Kohls**, is that without government intervention in the form of education, the poorest and most vulnerable in our society will be optionless, consigned to the ash-heap of an uncaring capitalism with no way out of the underclass.

So I wonder—if on the one hand people are so innately good and eager to learn, why did we devise oppressive schooling systems designed to stifle creativity and learning, as the critics of public schooling declaim? And, on the other hand, if government-run education is so good, why do we in the 1990s have a wider gap between the rich and the poor than ever before in this country? Does an élite's desire to remain comfortable, to maintain a status quo which keeps them in a superior economic and social position, counter their impulse to learn and let others learn? Learning is risky. One may not like what one finds out, or what others find out. Not learning is risky too. How entrenched are our own views on education? How much do any of us dare to challenge the foundations on which these views are built?

Reports From The Presentations:

Notes From A Salesperson In The Free Marketplace Of Ideas

I have given presentations at national conferences since 1987, and have learned at least one lesson—just because one offers a presentation doesn't mean anyone will come. (It's something like the limited correlation between teaching and learning, the former not being a necessary cause for the latter.) I decided to deal with my anxiety about this (once having had the only interested person come into my room, look in at me, my materials, and the lack of other attendees, and walk out), by putting together three offerings, and trying to think of snappy titles for them.

Teen Parents Take a Walkabout: A Home-Based Model

Yes, people did come; in fact we had among our group, **Linda Wells,** an experienced pro who has run a program for teen parents in Washington called **the Forks Alternative School**, since 1987; someone who was going to begin a program in Indiana, **Cecilia Kolano,** involved in teen parenting in Washington, and **Joy Jenson,** a **Walkabout** expert from **Mountain Open**.

I presented the essence of our program that has run for a year with nine teen parents, and is directed by one full-time teacher/administrator, and one half-time teacher. Because Maine is a rural state, teen parents who drop out of school are isolated geographically. The distance between students is as much as sixty miles, and they often have no phones or transportation. The Teen Parent Diploma Program has worked to bring school *to* these students, adapting **Maurice Gibbons'** Walkabout Model so that much of their curriculum is centered around the real challenges of their day -to-day life.

Comparing our approach to Linda's school-based program, and sharing notes on such things as: what to do when students don't come to the door for their scheduled lessons but you know they're in there (Linda tells her teachers to stay on the porch until the student gets tired of being quiet inside), highlights the fact that we have much to teach one another, regardless of who the convener of a session is. The other note I have from this group is the fact that I have hardly seen another man engaged in this work—almost all of our volunteers, certainly everyone that attended this session, were women. Intuition and experience at the Community School tells me that positive experience with men is limited for these students. A supportive male presence could profoundly affect students' outlook and judgment of the opposite gender.

Finally, Joy's expertise in the Walkabout as an educational model was a fascinating contribution to our talk. She has taught at Mountain Open since its inception, and has a fund of knowledge to contribute about this challenging and exciting approach to teaching and learning.

Why Write about our Experiences: How to Catch the Heartbeat of Your School

Like the best photos taken without film in the camera, this workshop will be re-created purely from my mind since I've managed to lose my notes. About eight attendees including Dave Lehman, Bob Fizzell, Andrée Quigley and five or six others drew up in a circle to get the answer to "Why Write." I started by documenting all the great reasons for not writing—and then rebutted those reasons with their answers, the final one being that good writing leads to better programs for kids.

Then, we all wrote and read a paragraph about something at work which moved us in the past year. Everybody had something to say, everybody had their own cadence, their own teaching/learning point, their own tone—and the full effect was moving. I then listed journals and publications which are delighted to have submittals from teacher/writers:

***Changing Schools*, the publication for our conference (Mary Ellen Sweeney, 303-331-9352)**
SKOLE **(Mary Leue, 72 Philip St., Albany, New York)**
***AERO*, short pieces, (Jerry Mintz's newsletter)**
the *National Dropout Prevention Network*, newsletter and Journal for At-Risk Issues (Marty Duckenfeld, NDPN, Clemson University) *Holistic Education Review*
Educational Leadership
***The National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools newsletter* (Ed Nagel, Santa Fe)**
***Re-Thinking Schools*, Milwaukee.**

The fact that it has taken me since last July to pull this piece together says something about the tension between practice and writing—and what often wins out in the life of an educator.

Is There Life After Graduation??

Facing all institutions *successful* at creating a sense of community is the paradox of how to help graduates in their next steps—in the case of schools, the transition beyond graduation. At the Community School residence this is a particularly acute experience because students only live with us for six months. The majority who graduate, having tasted a major success, return to face a familiar but changed situation which is challenging and frustrating. It is changed in the scene that through their achievement they have changed, becoming high school graduates after having been dropouts; it is familiar because the outside world has not changed much in six months and carries its familiarly haunting set of potential setbacks.

Post-graduation is where our students' "walkabout" begins— and, for many students, leaving the school is as hard as getting into it. Which leads me to my axiom: the better, more supportive, more successful experience a student has, the harder it is for them to leave. This would be especially true of short-term programs.

Suspecting that some variant of this phenomenon exists for many successful alternative programs, I put together a presentation on the Community School's **Outreach Program,** our guidance system for graduates who are back in the "real world."

Barely able to squeeze into the room, **Doug Cassidy, NY, Keith Hudak, NJ and Wayne Tenney, SD** and I engaged in a free-flowing discussion of how much affective, relational, and decision-making supports mean to our current students, and how much they can benefit from continued post-graduation contact.

Our efforts at the school to prepare students for the challenges of leaving by letting them know that they might regress to old behaviors, that they might feel angry with staff, that they might feel completely intolerant of a previously barely tolerable classmate— intrigued the attendees. They also noted that we offer graduates a variety of ways to continue involvement at school, particularly in family days where they discuss their experience with new parents, as tutors for classes we run, and as presenters to current students on the nitty-gritty of being out on one's own.

How does one fund an Outreach program? We discussed what **Carol Meixner** of the award-winning **Oasis High** did in Michigan, funding a pilot project through a community foundation. I suggested that alternative schools and programs look at additions like Outreach as primary prevention work in the field of substance abuse—funding from Federal Block Grants for prevention should continue despite being cut—and alternative education fits squarely in the mission of primary prevention.

"It Ain't The Meat, It's The Motion"—Try One Life At A Time

Some of us continue to work because we can see human-sized answers to inhuman-sized problems. **Steve Bonchek**, a former student of Bob Barr's at Indiana, directs the **Harmony School** which is located within a thousand yards of our conference. He and his staff have developed an educational "answer" for K-12 students by creating an innovative, independent school that has been a learning center for over twenty years. Recently the school has become part of Harmony School Education Center which includes two other programs—an outreach office to work with Indiana elementary schools, and an Institute for Research directed by the chair of curriculum studies at Indiana University.

And as "the word" is being spread from Harmony, it still exists *in* Harmony—hall lockers here are painted by students who use them, each room in this old public elementary school building is named for a chemical element, and the whole establishment seems to be "built for comfort, not for speed" (Chester Burnett).

Fame has not made Harmony weak. The place has character— an identity. How could one help but feel at home in a school which feels inhabited even when no one is there? Students not only study here, they are busy creating the place with their teachers. It feels comfortable, alive, "messy."

What *has* happened to the healthy "messiness" of Harmony's public counterparts? Where has the spirit gone? Why do elementary schools seem so much closer to providing humane education than high schools? Does proximity to "the real world" of adults, jobs, college, force high school teachers, students and administrators to take themselves too seriously?

One Life at a Time Cont'd.—or Close Encounters of a Humane Kind

I sit down to dinner at a Moroccan restaurant with other denizens of the **National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools** —a small but outspoken subgroup of this larger conference. Mostly private schools and home schoolers, this group has worked outside of the conventional system for years—some of the programs date back to the 1920's. These folks, are kindred spirits to me— working in the "hedgerows" of education, supporting ideas and practices which we hope will eventually permeate the "field" of education.

A long table with lots of faces, and big plates of rice, kebabs and other goodies in between. These conferences are such hard work. Sitting together are **Steve Bonchek, Fred Bay, Tina Dawson, Renée Beck, Robert Skenes, Barbara Smith, Lucas Thornton, Dawn Aschbacher, Colleen MacDonald and Jerry Mintz** (and several others whose names are lost to me). Many of our schools, including **the Community School in Camden**, the school I co-direct, started at the tail end of the 60's "free school" movement. Most of us have traded the material benefits and pay of a public school setting for the autonomy, human scale and freedom of an independent school.

Attending the conference became a financial possibility for most of us when Robert Skenes and others in the NCACS put together a successful grant to the **Bay Foundation** (as in Fred Bay), to provide partial scholarships.

One of the hoped-for outcomes of this combined conference was cross-pollination between the "private" and "public" sectors. My report, which you are currently reading, (if not, please wake up), is an attempt to grasp at the experience to see what was pollinated for me.

Our Moroccan meal does not inhibit discussion about education—Renée from the **Contra Costa School** and a student of hers whose name I have lost, discuss two primary life issues for students in our programs—relationships, and substance use/abuse: What to do when someone gets swallowed up in either issue? How to attend to these issues without proscribing or prescribing what to do and what not to do? How to draw a hard line when it is needed.

Later on I talk with Colleen, a student at the **Meeting School in Rindge, New Hampshire,** and she explains that program's way of dealing with student relationships—a big issue, as it is with us at the Community School, due to the residential nature of both programs. We recognize the similarities and differences of our approaches, and hope to pull our two staffs together sometime before the summer is over. If we learn something from one another that is helpful—what more could we ask from a conference—the people and programs represented offer new vantage points from which to look at our own work.

Back at the Conference, when I walk into **Greg Sinner's** presentation—he is now the principal of the **Illinois Math and Science Academy**—I am pleased to see I picked a popular workshop. Once he starts rolling, I can see why. Here is a veteran alternative educator who is now directing Illinois' number one school of math and science. They've got money, they've got equipment, they've got clout with the legislature, and they've got the sense to hire an alternative educator to make it all work for the kids.

Greg has only been in place one year—but his emphasis on **the relational, the community-building aspect** of the program are clear. The curriculum has had thousands of hours poured into it, and is a constantly changing entity—they entitle all of their course write-ups as "Draft 1, 2, 3, etc." (I went home and immediately suggested this idea for the teen parent curriculum we are writing—curricula should always be alive, existing in draft form, subject to formulation and re-formulation as needed.)

A recent school-wide survey showed that the curriculum was not what students valued the most in their experience at the academy: was it the high-priced equipment? Was it the super teachers? Was it the incredible physical plant? Was it the complex and challenging curriculum? NO, **it was their positive experience in the residence halls.** The need for community, for positive relations with others, for a sense of belonging and trust—all of which are so lacking in most lives—when even partially-filled is of supreme value, perhaps, at this point in the fragmenting of our society, of the highest value.

And so it goes; there are so many "heroes" at this conference. People who are, one by one, struggling to make change happen—a Sisyphus-style task to some, perhaps—but who achieve change at least at the Brownian level of motion, and some who are managing to move up to the molecular level: would you consider Ted Sizer's now several thousand member **Coalition for Essential Schools,** or Debbie Meier's consortium to re-create fifty New York City High Schools, or Arnie Langberg's work with a school board in Siberia to develop alternatives, or the NCACS working with homeschoolers in Japan, or Jerry Mintz's globetrotting efforts throughout the US and Russia: would you consider these as molecular efforts on their way to becoming elements, compounds, organisms??

Conferences are about this kind of molecular building—we build on each other's work. If it weren't for Arnie and his groundbreaking work implementing the Walkabout model in public schools, I would never have brought this idea back to mid- coast Maine, where we are using it with teen parents (and it's incredible). If it weren't for Tom Gregory who has written one of the best books on alternative education, *The Small School Reconsidered*, I wouldn't be taking the time to write now.

Wishes, Hopes, Dreams and Thanks

I leave this conference with new models. I want to get in closer touch with Bob Fizzell who runs an educational center in Washington State that combines five different approaches to alternative education from completely independent study to a much more structured approach. I hope that people who came to the presentation I led on writing, will WRITE. I hope that Dave Lehman who is the historian of the alternative school movement, and who writes beautifully, will write the story of his school and students which brought him to tears as he talked; I hope that the Community School staff and the Meeting School staff will get together; I hope that the three teachers who run alternative programs can make use of some of the ideas we have implemented in our **Community School** Outreach program; and I hope the other teen parent educators who left with our freshly-inked curriculum DRAFT, will find some of it useful with their students.

Of course there's a big thank-you due to **Robert Skenes** (president of the NCACS Board), **Fred Bay,** and all the others who worked on making this conference a possibility for those of us not in the mainstream of alternative education (if that is possible, what a concept!). Fred is looking for big answers. He wants those "small" learning events happening throughout the country in working alternative programs to be duplicated, transmitted, introduced into the larger venues of public education. The difficulty of finding the right word for dissemination is indicative of the difficulty that the process poses, because the unanswered question continues to be How? People in policy-making positions always tell me that there should be no need for alternatives beyond the system, the system should encompass them—but it doesn't, even though we know what will work, and have known for many years.

Ultimately we need to strike a balance between the depressing large-scale picture and the truly inspiring small-scale picture. Anyone who has seen **Fred Wiseman's "High School 2" about Central Park East Secondary School,** can't help but come away impressed and inspired. Anyone who reads the student log entries in the **Community School Newsletter** has to sense the profound affective and relational changes which are happening for students; and the list goes on— which is Bob Barr's point. Good things **are** happening. And, because of that, we can have the strength to hear and to doubt and to discuss John Gatto's critique of a "government schooling system" which is systematically keeping the public stupid in the interests of people who control our society. It's crucial to have these arguments, to take sides, to rethink, and to rethink again: what are we doing? why are we doing it? is there a better way?

We are in most serious trouble as educators when discussion fades away and we join our verbally shallow society constantly searching for a fast fix to our educational issues.

My final thanks go to **Tom Gregory** and his cohorts at the **University of Indiana** who took the time and trouble to give us the space to meet, think and feel. Putting on a conference is a huge thing, but carrying and energizing an organization as diverse, and purposefully un- (note, I am not using the prefix dis-) organized as the Affiliation of Alternative Educators for twenty-five years, is noteworthy and appreciated.

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Chris Mercogliano has been teaching at The Free School in Albany for twenty-three years, as he tells us, and more recently, co-directing. He has been a Board member of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools and has been active in the organization for over twenty years. He has also become a writer, an environmental activist and a midwifery advocate, as well as an editor of both ΣΚΟΛΕ *and* The Journal of Family Life. *His articles have appeared in many issues of* ΣΚΟΛΕ, *and his first book,* Making It Up As We Go Along, *will be published next year.See the conclusion of this book which appears starting on page*

We asked him to give us his reflection on Emanuel's very informative report on the Alternative Educational conference of last summer.

COMMENTARY ON A COMMENTARY

by Chris Mercogliano

Reading over Emmanuel Pariser's thorough and well-written report on last summer's International Alternative Schools conference held in Bloomington, Indiana (above), two details jumped out at me: the low attendance (only about a hundred) and the conference's decidedly non-alternative structure, with the BIG people, as Emanuel put it, up on stage and the rest sitting in rows facing them and having to come up to a microphone in order to pose their comments and questions to the panel of experts.

Those two bits of information in particular caught my attention, I think, because I only recently returned with a group of students from the annual conference of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools in Olympia, WA, where I observed the same two patterns. This year's National Coalition conference was quite poorly attended (only 150, two-thirds of them children) and the trend there over the years has been for the organization to be more and more controlled from behind the scenes by a board of directors which meets separately and prior to each annual gathering, with the membership meeting becoming increasingly *pro forma* every year.

Interestingly, the two groups have relatively distinct constituencies—the former consisting mostly of public alternative schools and programs and the latter mostly independent ones and homeschoolers—with a certain amount of cross-over between the two. Perhaps even more interestingly, there was an entire contingent from the National Coalition attending this year's International Alternative Schools conference, thanks to a grant from the Bay Foundation.

Two aging international alternative education organizations, two reports of declining attendance (I don't actually know if the poor turn-out at the last public alternatives conference reflects a trend or was simply a one-time occurrence) and of practices inconsistent with a philosophy of challenging convention. What does it all mean?

I can't speak for the public alternatives group because I've never been involved with it and there will have to rely on Emanuel Pariser for my information. My experience of the National Coalition is that it is currently in a state of severe decline, and I have a strong suspicion that the gap between its theory and its practice has had a great deal to do with the gradual erosion of active participation in the work of the organization. From Emanuel's occasional outbreaks of sarcasm in his conference report, I got the sense that a certain amount of ennui and of going through the motions has beset his organization as well.

The sad part here is that it's not as though either organization, born of the world's latest educational freedom movement mixed with the idealism of the sixties, has accomplished its goals, which broadly stated might be to help to release the society from the educational straitjacket that had become so well tailored by that time. Meanwhile, at the public alternatives conference they were at least continuing to wrestle with some of the fundamental questions underlying this business of alternative education, such as: Can the system of compulsory education in this country ever be made over so as to become more humane and more relevant to the needs of today's young people; or should the whole thing, as Ivan Illich has said many times, be disestablished just as was the Church beginning with the Renaissance?

As Emanuel Pariser tells it, the "titans" of education (his term) addressing his group fell into two distinct groups, the tinkerers and the scrap heapers, each getting in some very good licks during their general sessions, and leaving everyone to ponder the question for themselves. Clearly, there is a lot of good work being done by various people in public alternative schools and one can readily understand why they might draw up short when John Gatto starts talking about public education and

(Oklahoma) fertilizer solutions all in the same sentence. Likewise, one can equally readily understand why veteran teachers like Gatto, who fought for change on the inside for so many years only to be stabbed in the back time and time again, would advocate that the whole system be torn down once and for all. Who's to say whether either side in this debate is right or if there even is a single answer to the current dilemma in education.

And then, on the other side of that thin line between public and private, there is much good work being done by the hundreds of small independent free schools scattered about the land and by the homeschoolers who are now reaching a million strong. Each in their own way is serving as a micro-model of another means to the end of raising kids up healthy and sane in very contradictory times. Here on this side I, as Emanuel asked himself aloud in his report, frequently wonder whether what we are accomplishing off in our own small private corners of the universe has sufficient value to justify our efforts. To this core question, however, my personal answer is more certain. It is an unequivocal "yes": we validate our investments of time, energy and commitment every time we manage to foster significant growth in just a single young person, whether he or she be of our own blood or someone else's. I realize this statement has become a bit of a truism; nevertheless it is one which continues to keep me eager and excited about my work even as I wind down my twenty-third year of teaching in a small independent free school.

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Chris

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Jerry

Jerry Mintz, well-known to many ΣΚΟΛΕ *readers, has become the foremost worldwide networker and ambassador on behalf of alternative education through his networking newsletter* **AERO (Alternative Education Resource Organization)** *as well as through his travels to visit schools and attend conferences in many parts of the world including France, Russia, England and Israel, which have resulted in numerous international contacts with alternative schools. This account is taken, with permission, from his e-mail account of the visit..*

A DRAMATIC TIME IN ISRAEL

by Jerry Mintz

We went to Israel on April 11th for the Hadera Conference, the Fourth International Conference of Democratic Schools. It was a very dramatic time. Some participants had canceled because of the suicide bombs of previous weeks. As I arrived at my relatives' house two days before the conference, all eyes were glued to the TV news as missiles were hitting Northern Israel, and Israel was counter-attacking by trying to pinpoint Hezbollah positions in Lebanon.

That night as I tried to sleep off the jet lag I was awakened by a "Boom, boom" in the distance. It grew louder. I went upstairs where my cousin was watching TV. Three years ago I remember her as a school-girl who played good tennis for her team. Now, at 19, she trains Israeli boys for the army and was home for the weekend.

"BOOM!" It was getting closer. "What is that?'" I asked her. Rolling the letter R she responded, "Ghrain." "What?" I asked. "Ghrain. It is ghraining. It is a thunderstorm!" I wasn't expecting a thunderstorm in Israel.

While in Israel I rode public buses five times, sometimes scanning the passengers to look for overdressed, wild-eyed men. But the Israelis themselves seemed to be used to this sort of tension. In fact, after the conference we went on a bus tour around Israel, and of course, they went NORTH! I asked if that wasn't dangerous and they said, "We know the range of the missiles. We won't go within their range!" Yet on Independence Day, with fireworks displays in the distance in every direction, I was at a multi-family bonfire/barbecue. They had the bonfire because they felt it was dangerous to take their families where there were crowds. One of the families had come down from the north after a missile had come within a kilometer of their house. After they left, one had come within 50 yards. "I'm so glad we left," the father said to me. "The kids would never recover from such a trauma as a bomb falling nearby."

The conference itself began on April 14th, ran to the 19th, and it had its own share of drama and excitement. There were hundreds of participants, and over a hundred twenty-five from out of Israel. About half of those were there through connections with AERO. Many of the participants were children.

The AERO-connected attendees included Liz Wertheim of Hawaii, Jim Hoeppner of the Alternative School in Calgary Canada, with a group of about ten from his school, Oleg Belen of the Stork Family School in the Ukraine, later joined by a graduate, George, who is studying in Israel, Jim Murphy of West Side Alternative School in New York and a group of ten, Patrice Crève with two others from Theleme School in France, Stan Kantner, who now directs Clonlara's Compuhigh from Israel, David Gribble, Sean Bellamy and seven others from Sands School, in England, Justin Baron of Summerhill, Barry Lamb, who is trying to start a school in Australia, and Fred Bay of the Bay-Paul Foundation in New York, with whom I flew over.

In addition there were participants from Hungary, Germany, Austria, Denmark, and many Israeli Schools. The Ministry of Education was a sponsor of the conference and will reimburse Hadera for many of the expenses. They are encouraging the development of more democratic schools. The Minister, Amnon Rubenstein, was scheduled to speak, as was Leah Rabin, but they were forced to cancel because of the crisis in the north. I had hoped to ask Rubenstein why homeschooling is illegal in Israel. I think it is an issue they must deal with.

We were housed at a conference center called Givat Haviva, which is run by a kibbutz specializing in Israeli-Arab relations. The food included wonderful fresh fruits and vegetables. The mornings were spent at the Democratic School of Hadera, a public alternative school which organized the conference. The students there had voted to cancel classes for the week so they could participate in the conference. The k-12 school is run by a democratic parliament and has non-compulsory class attendance. Yacov Hecht is the director. There are three hundred students in the school, with three thousand on the waiting list!

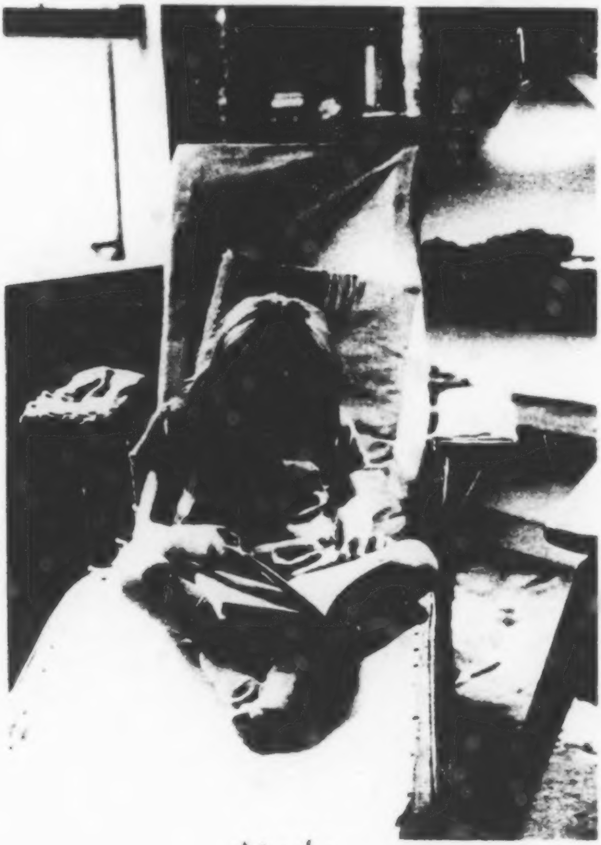
Many of the workshops dealt with various aspects of democratic education such as the role of the adult, the decision-making process, "When Ideology Meets Reality," etc. I think it was difficult for students to participate in these.

One of the workshops I did was on table tennis, but I was disappointed that it was not until the next to last day of the conference that they got a table. People sometimes do not understand why I consider it so important to have a ping pong table. I did a workshop on this last year in Russia which I called "Ping Pong and Pedagogy." Here are two reasons: At a conference such as this one it presents an opportunity for people of a variety of ages and languages to take part in a common activity. Second, it is non-academic. But because my teacher was perhaps the best in the United States, I can show people how to improve their game spectacularly in a brief time span. Through this process students can learn that they are quick learners, and thus gain confidence in themselves as learners. After the table appeared, it became very popular. I was able to teach about twenty-five people. The school will keep the table.

There were also presentations by schools. Two of the most dramatic were by a democratic school on the Golan Heights, which is fighting for full approval by the Ministry of Education, and a democratic school in Bethlehem in the West Bank, the Hope Flowers School. The latter presentation was by its director, Hussein Issa, a Moslem Arab, who had barely received a twelve-hour pass to come over to make his presentation. As he said, "It is sometimes harder to fight for peace than for war." He lost his mother and son in the process. The school is co-educational, and has Jewish volunteers who teach music and Hebrew. His school makes a variety of crafts to support itself, and he is looking for places in which they can market their wares. PO Box 732, Bethlehem/ West Bank, Via Israel.

Two unusual homeschool groups came over from Austria. One is a circus family, which supports itself by performances of unicycles and juggling, including spectacular flaming torches, which they demonstrated for us. Another group I had met at last year's Vienna conference. Fourteen of them, with children as young as 7, DROVE to Israel in two vehicles, through Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Syria, and Jordan! It took them ten days and many bribes at the borders. I negotiated with a ferry company to reduce their price in hopes that the family's trip back could be expedited by a ride to Greece. The two groups were planning to visit the West Bank school on the day I left Israel. There was general agreement to create a computer network centered around democratic education, and to keep in touch electronically. We plan to meet for chat sessions on Puget Sound Community Schools VEE. Send me e mail at jmintz@acl.nyit.edu if you would like to join us. To get to the VEE, telnet moo.speakeasy.org 7777. PSCS usually has a meeting at 8:30 PM Pacific Time on Wednesdays.

We have about five hours of video shot in Israel. Let us know if you want the edited version for AERO's usual $25.



Mady

Robert Kastelic, who has given us a number of splendid articles, holds his Doctorate degree from Columbia University, Teachers College in New York. He has taught in Education at Pacific University in Oregon, supervised teachers in New York, Oregon and Arizona. Having taught secondary social studies for over eighteen years in Arizona he also worked with student teachers preparing for the field. He is presently working on Research and Development for Southwest Research and Educational Services, Inc., a non profit education group.

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO, DRAW YOU A PICTURE ?

by Robert L. Kastelic, Ed.D.

As a parent, have you ever had this experience? You are talking to your child and trying to make a point and you find yourself staring into a blank face? You sense that your child clearly does not understand you. You try in earnest to 'get through' to the child but with no success. Saying the same thing over and over or saying it louder and louder does nothing but annoy both of you. Eventually, you either give up on the point, or you merely insist and make demands. You claim that some day when they grow up maybe they'll understand and get it.

Our parents said similar things and many of us have grown up and we *still* don't get it. In some limited cases kids do follow through with your requests. When the child does follow through with apparent compliance you perceive that they understand. But, this may not be the case at all. In fact, all the child may be doing is mimicking behaviors, imitating, or simply accommodating you. There may be little real evidence that they are actually comprehending what you intended. In many schooling situations which have rote-styled learning this similar kind of result is often the case. Perhaps, that's why so many children respond to the question of what they learned in school today with, "Nothing." However, with some additional information and a few personal adjustments you may find far greater results can occur. By identifying a person's preferred learning style you may find improved results.

"What do you want me to do, draw you a picture?", an often-heard question of a frustrated parent or teacher. For many learners, that may be the very best thing one can do. For a visually based learner drawing a picture may reap significant rewards.

Both of our sons are visual learners in many areas. It took a while for us to ascertain this fact but the boys were giving us clues all of the time. When we finally paid attention to how they seemed to learn things best, it became rather obvious. If you want to connect the meaning or relationship of an idea it's best to sketch it out for them and they will then build meaning on it for themselves. Not everyone learns things the same way. After years of extensive work researchers determined that learning takes place in a variety of ways and that everyone has a preferred way to learn given a particular situation. Often times we build in frustrations because we do not allow for the variety of personal learning needs. Within a family not everyone learns the same way. Often times we think that if we learned something a certain way everyone can learn it that way too. However, that is simply not the case. You may have three, or five children all with different preferred learning styles. Also, it is important to note that all learners do not necessarily have the same learning style for every subject area. In other words they don't learn all things the same way. For instance, they may be a visual learner with math problems, a kinesthetic learner in science, and a verbal learner with social studies concepts. You need to check these capabilities out. Then, you need to ascertain the preferred learning styles. Preferred learning styles are not something characteristic of just children either. While teaching University graduate students within their Masters degree programs, I found similar learning struggles. In presenting conceptual frameworks for the Masters level thesis papers I discovered there were some amazing breakthroughs if I included in my descriptions a drawing, or a diagram. Observing Graduate level students having the 'ah ha' expression only confirmed my fears of how many visual young learners were probably getting lost in the maze of auditory instructions at the elementary levels.

A frustrated learner is one who finds it in their best interest to tune out what is going on rather than continue to be frustrated.

As an adult you have probably experienced something very similar to these situations. Suppose, you needed to learn something and the only way you could 'get it' or have success understanding it was to pick it up and put it together in a tactile manner. Hands on. Anything else was only continued frustration. When you were able to actually handle it then something clicked in your head and an understanding took place. Sometimes it can be really simple things and sometimes it might be a complex idea. Some people think that they are dumb or stupid if they can not understand something presented to them. Yet, the way that something is presented may in fact be the problem.

Learning to drive an automobile in a driver simulator machine is a rather non-productive process for a large percentage of people. They need to get behind the wheel and press on the gas: feel the energy of a car. Touching the controls that bring the car to a stop creates a meaningful experience for them. They are also the ones that need to feel the beat of music.

Why do so many people fear the computer while others grasp the idea quickly and take off with it? Well, to begin with, the computer industry began producing a product that was hard to reproduce by other manufacturers rather than making it user friendly. By the time they found out the misgivings of trying to keep industry secrets, a lot of potential users were scared off. Yet, once convinced that the machines could be made more "friendly," the consumers were somewhat willing to come back. If you look at how the cars and computers are made to be friendly you will see a variety of strategies being employed. Lots of visuals, a variety of hands on and verbal stuff going on at the same time. The computer industry has seen the benefits of presenting information in a variety of learning styles.

Some children already know their preferred learning style. They may have already been presented with learning activities in school that helped them to identify their learning strengths. You might consider talking with them about it.

As a parent, what can you do? How can you find out what kind of preferred learning style your child has? The first thing you can do is be a keen observer. Observation is perhaps the most practical way to begin the process. It is also the most overlooked process. Learners will give clues to their preference. Provide a variety of options or situations that allow for choices to be made. According to research by Howard Gardner and David Perkins at Harvard University, there are a variety of learning characteristics. Try to keep in mind some of the following basic characteristics of some preferred learning styles:

Linguistic learners will relate well to both verbal and written information.

***Visual learners** will prefer a picture or a diagram to clarify or organize information to be learned or understood.*

***Mathematical learners** tend to use inductive and deductive reasoning; they tend to be good at abstract problem solving.*

***Tactile/Hands-on/Kinesthetic learners** relate to movement and inner motion; they prefer hands-on or even mechanical work.*

***Musical learners** recognize and are sensitive to tone and beat.*

***Spatial learners** are able to visualize object and create internal pictures: pilots are good spatial learners.*

***Interpersonal learners** are "people smart;" intrapersonal learners relate best to the inner self.*

***Situational learners** are people that react intuitively, given the situation sometimes called "street smarts" and sometimes, common sense. They sense situations around them.*

There are also predesigned tests that can be administered by a professional evaluator. If you are curious and want to know more, ask your school if they can provide such a test for your child. So the next time you encounter that blank look as a response from your child, try another approach. Instead, begin with, "Here, let's sit down and I'll draw you a picture to describe what I mean." In doing so you will have recognized the child's preferred learning style and reduced the fear within them. You may get a different and a more desirable response. Can you visualize that?

Nancy Ost, familiar to both **ΣΚΟΛΕ** ***and*** **Journal of Family Life** ***subscribers for her splendid reviews and articles, has ben teaching at The Free School for over twenty years, and additionally co-directing for several more. She has four children, offers massage therapy and runs a natural foods coop store in what we sometimes laughingly refer to in the community as our spare time! One of Nancy's central concerns is the topic of this article—the drugging of active children who resist the "dumbing-down" of ordinary schooling.***

ATTENTION—NOT DRUGS

by Nancy Ost

Many of you may have read the lead article in the March 18, 1996 issue of *Newsweek*: "Ritalin—Are We Overmedicating Our Kids?" For the twenty years I have been at The Free School, we have never admitted a kid or a teacher who is drug-dependent—either for health problems or for "learning" problems—without a commitment from the family to do whatever is necessary to end the drug-dependency.

We believe that the body acts as an alarm mechanism telling us that there is something out-of-balance in one's life. American medicine, however, focuses in a disproportionate way on alleviating symptoms rather than looking at where the *dis*-ease originates. As the *Newsweek* article states, the desired outcome for children on the drug, Ritalin, is that they behave appropriately in the school classroom; in other words, that they sit quietly for many hours of the day so that the teacher can do his or her job without interruption. Nowhere did this *Newsweek* report address the idea that the deficiency may lie within our school system, rather than in its students; that hours of sitting may not be natural for a child's body or that ritualized teaching processes may not meet every individual child's learning needs.

The calls we receive from parents who are searching for an alternative for their children are increasing in number—especially calls from families with young boys who are bright, but unhappy in the public school; boys who are inquisitive and have a difficult time with the rigid formula set forth for them each day in their classroom. More and more we hear that drugs are being recommended to curb this natural enthusiasm.

Last year a mother came to us with her eight-year-old son who was being medicated and still was experiencing difficulty in school. She saw his self-esteem waning drastically from the constant barrage of criticism he faced each day at school. Like us, she didn't want her son on medication and was very willing to cooperate in taking him off. The family doctor felt, too, that there was no need for the medication if Tommy was going to attend a school which did not require him to sit quietly for hours. And thus our school was blessed with the presence of an enthusiastic, energetic, animal-loving, free spirit, released from a cage not of his making.

Our public school system does not take into account "from whence its charges come" for a few hours of their lives each day. In our years of experience at The Free School, we have come to honor the selves which our students bring with them to school. Tommy's family has lots of problems—divorce, alcohol, violence, drugs, prison. Each day worries, inappropriate for an eight-year-old, flood this young boy's world. How can we compassionately expect him to desire to sit still while an adult, unfamiliar with his dilemmas, teaches him about ideas which don't touch the real world in which he lives? Tommy spent his first year with us spending most of the day perfecting his back-flip. Something inside of him needed to do nothing else. And we honored that. Unfortunately, the four years of criticism and failure which Tommy experienced in public school makes him very shy of anything that he thinks looks like "expected school work." So we don't push. Our reward isn't in seeing kids regurgitate facts we have spoon-fed them. Our reward is in seeing Tommy develop the courage to tell the truth, to experience being an important part of a school community, to be respected for what he has to offer, to discover the joy of sharing his own wisdom with others in the school. Tommy doesn't do back-flips all the time now and, to tell the truth, I miss that. But that need of his has been fulfilled and he is growing in other ways. **And** he has had no medication for a year and a half!

Six years ago another family came to us with a four-year-old girl and a five-year-old boy. Their son had asthma and was on regular medication. Again we said we needed to see the medication eliminated. Again the family was in favor and was willing to work with us toward that end. Today Zeke is an eleven-year-old math and computer whiz with absolutely no signs of asthma.

As a school we are willing to work with the anxieties, fears and anger which often manifest as asthma in our society. As other health experts have discovered, asthma victims need lots

Nancy and friend

of physical activity and often are members of a family where dependency is unconsciously encouraged. Our urban school has land in the country and often takes groups of children on overnight excursions. The first time Zeke was old enough to go on one of these trips, bedlam broke out for him and his family. He protested so much that his family came to us and said they didn't think Zeke should have to go if he didn't want to. Part of the family pattern, which stimulated Zeke's asthma, was becoming apparent. We were compassionate but insistent that these trips are part of the school program and are not optional. Today Zeke participates in twelve-day cross-country trips with the school without a moment's hesitation.

I was astonished that the *Newsweek* article did not address other issues in our society which might be reason for the increased ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder) for which our children are being drugged! When one of our teachers heard the phrase "attention deficit disorder" for the first time, she said, "Oh, the child hasn't received enough attention." Exactly!!! And very few educators are seriously addressing these issues—that there are too many children in a classroom, that more and more children live in single-parent households or households where both parents work, that television has become the replacement for "warm-body attention" in too many families.

I was recently told by a doctoral student who has been studying the positive affects of "storytelling" on young children's vocabulary and their ability to think that she has noticed that some children's literature is being written to mimic the fast-moving, violence-filled story lines that fill the television screen, including what we call "cartoons." As a teacher I find this very disturbing.

Because we are a small school and develop close relationships with our families, I know which kids spend a lot of time in front of the television or playing video games. Inevitably these are the kids who don't enjoy quiet time, whose imaginations are tilted toward Power Ranger scenarios, who come to school with excesses of pent-up energy, whose thinking abilities and common sense are very limited because too many hours of the day have been spent hypnotized by the television, Nintendo or HBO, who don't listen well or participate well in a group. Yet these are the very symptoms of ADHD listed in *Newsweek* for which doctors so readily prescribe drugs. I know which families have serious problems and I see those children often acting out their worries in their peer relationships or in their lack of interest in "school work." Again these are symptoms for which drugs are prescribed. Something is very wrong here!

In our close relationships with our Free School families, we attempt to also educate parents as to what things in our culture have a positive effect and which ones have a negative effect on their children's learning process and on their lives as a whole. We also listen compassionately to the stories of parents who are struggling to just survive.

The answer to *Newsweek*'s question—*Are We Over-medicating Our Children?*—of course we are. Our children are crying out; they are the barometer of our society, yet we are trying to shut out their message with drugs. As we have found in our work here at The Free School, drugs are not what is called for. Our children and their families simply need more compassionate **attention!**

HOW LIKE AN ANGEL CAME I DOWN
A. BRONSON ALCOTT

HOW LIKE AN ANGEL CAME I DOWN

By A. Bronson Alcott

Alcott's Conversations *is immensely rewarding reading for anyone; it is sheer reading pleasure, enlightenment, insight, the discovery of a side of children many of us never see, a side of ourselves generally masked, a glimpse of history our school texts never never touch, and an enrichment of our own spirit.*

—Joseph Chilton Pearce

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This is our second article (see the spring issue for the first) written by a man who could, probably should, perhaps some day will, be teaching/counseling in a youth program for kids who have turned to the excitement that is to be found on the wrong side of the law, having been discouraged or disillusioned by other options. Michael knows whereof he writes, as he is serving a term in a "correctional facility" himself. We are grateful to subscriber Dorothy Lonsky for putting us in touch with this remarkable person, for knowing we would be honored to publish his thoughts—and to Michael for sending them. The program of which he writes (YAP) is not unique: we know of a similarly valuable one, Middle Earth, in Quakertown, PA, run by one of our subscribers, Elizabeth Quigley—but it is precious and alas, all too rare!

HEALING OUR COMMUNITIES AND TROUBLED YOUTH

by Michael Massurin

Communities throughout our nation are afflicted with all kinds of problems which some people have liken to a creeping illness. This is not an "illness" in the traditional sense nor is it spread by some unseen microbe. Yet, make no mistake, this "illness" can be deadly to the community. If we think of a community as a patient, we might consider putting some on the critical list. We do not have to look through a microscope to clearly view the devastation this "illness" is creating. All we need do to view this "illness", to see its symptoms, is to look at the people within a community. People who are scared, hurting and struggling.

It is the people within a community and more specifically their behavior, actions and culture that help define a community and give it a certain character. Increasingly today the actions and behaviors of some of the young members of a community are not only self-destructive but also causing great pain and upheaval in their community. Dropping out of school, drug abuse, random violence, crime and prison have become rites of passage for the youths of all too many communities. A culture of violence and despair prevail. The whole community feels the ripple effect of individual actions and behavior. Families break apart and then splinter further as the hurt continues to spread. These young people are suppose to be our future. But what kind of a future can the community expect if the people who are suppose to be building for tomorrow are destroying themselves and others today?

Healing is not passive. To move towards balance and wholeness steps need to be taken. When people become ill, they usually use all means at their disposal to regain their health. Communities should be looking to do the same. But all too often, communities are unwilling to consider creative solutions or utilize all the resources available for the job. Of course there are communities that utilize all their resources and people with interesting results.

The K'ung, sometimes referred to as the Bushmen of the Kalahari desert consider dance a community event with healing power. A number of times a month, a healing dance is started at night. What may look like a primitive dance to the outsider is in fact a therapeutic event for the entire community. During these dances, all members of the community join in. The healthy along with the ill dance together. What emerges is not some miracle cure but rather a mending, a healing and strengthening of the community. A wholeness that did not exist before now does. A strange method to achieve healing and wholeness within the community? Perhaps to the Western mind but if this "cure" works, who are we to question it.

Turning again to our communities here, more than ever there is a need to seek out and employ creative solutions. Steps must be taken to deter our youth from a life of drugs, violence and crime. There are different schools of thought on this from lock them up and throw away the key to intensive programs and family involvement. I do not wish to argue the merits of one approach over the other. What I would like the reader to consider is an often overlooked resource in this battle to heal the community. When we consider the question: Who can relate to these troubled youth who are causing so much pain?, a logical answer is prisoners. Yes, these are people who have already caused pain within a community. In fact, they caused so much pain through their actions that the laws of the community removed them from society. They understand what these youngsters are doing and where they are headed. At one time, they were in their shoes.

When I talk about prisoners, I am not talking about just any prisoner. Obviously some should not talk to our youth. Others have no interest in doing so. Still others are in too much pain and dealing with a multitude of personal problems. They are in no position to help a troubled youth or provide the community with a source of healing and balance. But, there are prisoners who can and do provide a unique service which, if given the chance, can help reach these troubled youth and heal some of the hurt.

The Youth Assistance Program (YAP) is a resource that exists today in a number of prisons throughout New York State. This program was started a number of years ago by concerned prisoners with the approval of the Department of Corrections. Inmate organizations in some cases helped start these groups. Some were fortunate enough to receive outside expertise and training from professionals. Others received training from inhouse corrections counselors who volunteered their time to work with the groups. As these groups formed and grew, certain realities became very clear. These men realized that there was a real need within many communities to address the youth and try to prevent them from taking the same harmful steps they had. They also realized that the scared straight approach, simply trying to frighten a child away from a life of crime had limited value. The world many of these troubled youth live in is more scary then we might imagine. Other than add fear, a YAP group tries to break the cycle and offer positive alternatives. Finally, these men realized that they had hurt their communities. To give back something, to perhaps begin to help the community heal and in the process heal themselves seemed right.

Since inception, the many men involved with this program have been carefully screened. Certain criteria must be met and each member is expected to live up to the words they speak. Each member is asked to look within themselves and come up with a presentation which will hopefully reach some young person brought in. Such topic as drug abuse, the importance of education, decision making and consequence, family values, self-esteem and images are presented. Myths about glamorous lifestyles involving drugs or crime are laid to rest. Most members share personal episodes from their life to illustrate the point that they have already been where these young people are at now. The path they are headed on leads to prison or the grave. The harshness and realities of prison life are presented both in words and by allowing the visiting youth to see selected parts of the prison. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then they leave with an text full of stark memories. There is no formal pay or recognition for this work. All of the men selected to participate do this on a volunteer basis. The real payoff for this work comes from knowing that perhaps some young person heard their message and leaves changed. The work is a small price to pay for perhaps saving a life and helping the community to heal.

Groups coming in have ranged from Court referrals with one foot in the door already to honor students working on a government class project. The messages presented to these groups may be slightly modified depending upon the group but the truth is, all of our youth today are at risk. No community is safe any more from drugs or crime. Even if a young person is not causing harm to a community, they may be suffering with the pain spread by their peers.

The Youth Assistance Program is not the sole answer to all of the problems facing our troubled youth or communities. No one program or approach can come up with a universal "cure" to these problems or the pain they may spread through a community. But this program is a useful and powerful tool that can help. Combining this with more family, school and civic involvement, may help a community stem the tide of violence and pain. Each community needs to ask itself what must we do to restore our balance and begin our healing process. Whether the entire village joins in dance or chooses to seek out a non-traditional approach like YAP to help heal the pain, the time to embrace help and heal is now.

"SUMMERHILL FOR—AND FOR"

by Mary M. Leue, The Free School,
Albany, New York

Ed Jones, the editor of *A Voice for Children*, a Summerhillian newsletter in Santa Fe, New Mexico, called me recently, and, among other things, we discussed my writing an article on Summerhill, which I've visited twice in the past few years. I agreed, but only after we had talked out my doubts. "I'm not ready to rubber-stamp Summerhill," I told him. "I love the school and the people, but I am not willing to surrender my own perspective to write that kind of article. What I've read in your newsletter and the Trust Journal are mainly parochial in origin, which is fine, but I can't do that." "I won't publish a 'Summerhill For and Against' article," Ed told me. "Of course not," I answered. "Summerhill has had far too many ambivalent supporter/detractors in the press at large! That would be an obscenity! The same thing happened to Wilhelm Reich too, and I won't do it! That's why I'm in a quandary."

As we continued to explore the subject, it gradually became clearer to me that there is a lot of leeway between writing my heart feelings and still not rubber-stamping Summerhill, which I hadn't been willing to do! In fact, not wanting to do that is in itself a real compliment to Neill. I have saved several postcards from him with brief but cogent responses to letters I had sent him in 1968-9, during our Sabbatical year in England. I had written him expressing my wish to start a school (which I actually did on returning home). His advice to me was to remind me that imitating his school was a very bad idea! And when I had asked him if he had ever thought of doing a school in which working class kids were students (which was my hope), his pithy rejoinder was, "I'd think myself daft to try."

So Zoë Readhead (Neill's daughter and the present Head of Summerhill) would not be likely to find many points of external similarity between The Free School in Albany and her Summerhill. We are small (35-45 kids), inner city, non-residential, pre- and elementary school in age range but without a middle or high school group, of mixed racial and socio-economic origin. We do school in an old (mid-19th century vintage) Italian language parochial school building of somewhat grim appearance outside and terminally grubby (although not at all grim!) inside—and the children's play yard is small.

In terms of how the two schools "work," there are differences as well. Kids are asked to participate in noon meal clean-up, which is apparently a "no no" at Summerhill. We hire a cook (who is also a teacher), but do the rest ourselves. Our council meetings are never scheduled but are always ad hoc, called in response to an immediate problem which the people involved (kids *and* adults) have failed to resolve by lesser means. Administrative decision-making is conducted by weekly meetings of staff to which kids *could* come, but don't unless for a special reason, and don't seem to find relevant to their sense of autonomy. It would seem to us excessively theoretical to expect them to want to on a regular basis. On the other hand, more and more graduates are returning to become members of the teaching staff for a few years before launching out into the "world," so the non-involvement of younger students doesn't seem to create a lasting lack of desire or capacity to participate in school affairs of administration.

One of the things Ed mentioned over the phone to me was how signally rare it is for schools that call themselves alternative to function in a mutually respectful (self- and other), peer-level atmosphere. He's right, and understands how important it is to understand the difference between the indirect, "iron fist in velvet glove" power position a lot of adults employ and *real* equality. As Neill put it, "Freedom, not license." That concept is very tricky, because a heck of a lot of people confuse catering to kids, patronizing, flattering or manipulating them, babying them or neglecting to demand accountability from them, with being "real" with them. Kids know intuitively how much leeway they have with adults, and behave accordingly! In this respect Summerhill is beyond reproach—and there are darned few adults connected with schools who value true respect toward and inclusion of kids within the power structure, regardless of their ideology, in spite of lip service!

The adult contingent at Sudbury Valley School is one of the very few schools still extant in the US of which I know that practices what it preaches. I include us in that category, but it may even be that it is not possible for a person (like me) who works inside the school to judge this phenomenon objectively. I know that our staff members have felt critical of the "disciplinary" methods used by a number of other alternative schools which, on the other hand, include students fully in their administrative functions! In this sense, Summerhill's assigning of fines or other penalties by vote at the meeting to "wrong-doers" is something we would not often do. It would strike us as an indication of a failure of the council meeting system we employ for problem-solving to have to resort to fines or other tokens of admonishment. Much more often, problems are resolved by reconciliation between warring parties through patient sorting out of bad feelings and injuries on both sides, supported or corrected by witnesses to the event, until everyone involved has a clear sense of the underlying pain that has contributed to the unjust behavior. But this difference too may reflect, at least partially, the age at which many of our kids start school with us. We have a pre-school, almost full-time day care, group which feeds into the "K-9" (ungraded) group on the lower floor of our building. Little kids upstairs get to be with the big, downstairs kids from the word go, and look forward to the day when they can join them in "real school." Dale Bethel accurately decries the politically correct advocacy by public school supporters of "essential social skills from peer learning" as about as sensible as the "peer learning" of *Lord of the Flies*. But in our case—as in Summerhill and Sudbury Valley—it is real, and is important. What they learn from us and from the other two schools may differ, and probably does, but it's important in each case! As it is in all alternative schools.

But this fact does make the "system" devised by the involved participants within each school to handle dissent, conflict, violation of the rights of the individual, a significant issue. On this matter, I don't think head count democracy is enough. In logical terms, it is perhaps "necessary, but not sufficient." I suspect there is a very real sense in which genuine democracy defined by "town meeting" methods (as a kid I entertained myself watching the operation of town meetings from the balcony of our town hall in our small New England town) *may* involve injustice toward individuals, if a decision made by the majority is based on majority disapproval or dislike of the person, perhaps for very good reasons, but still, unfair in the purely humanistic sense of the word. And when applied to kids, potentially even more so, unless the school population is pretty exclusive, pretty homogeneous. George von Hilsheimer's schools (known sequentially as Summerlane, then Buck Brook Farm, and finally, Green Valley, all allegedly modeled after Summerhill) struck me as being of this kind, judging by the stories I heard and read about it over the years of its existence. Toward the end, when they had finally moved to Florida, I remember reading of an incident in

Mary and raspberries

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which the kids voted to bury a kid up to his head!

Human nature—at least, the nature of pre-pubescent kids—is very malleable. That's real "Lord of the Flies" stuff, and I sometimes speculate that it might have reflected George's own secret, kid-like glee when his school kids (who were state-assigned "JDs," from whom the school derived its income at the time) acted out his own hidden sadism—or perhaps (to be less cynical) either his love affair with ideology (like the Nazi doctors who had no doubts about their own morality when they conducted their "experiments" with officially designated non-people) or his own growing sense of disenchantment with the school process. Summerhill reflects the sweet affection of Neill—and now of Zoë—for kids. Sudbury Valley reflects the sweetness of its adult founders/administrators. Jerry Mintz's Shaker Mountain in Vermont and Herb Snitzer's Lewis-Wadhams in upstate New York were equally benevolent. Yet each school has (had) its own unique flavor. All but Jerry's school catered exclusively to middle class kids. Jerry's was more like ours in Albany, a mixed group (see his account of the school's origins in *Challenging the Giant, the Best of ΣΚΟΛΕ,* vol. I, pp. 1-13). I take these similarities and differences as reflections of the qualitative similar-ities/differences between George, Zoë, Mimsy/Dan/Hanna, Jerry and Herb! Interestingly enough, Jerry's own council meeting system, although very similar to Summerhill's, had a more flexible voting pattern in which decisions that had been taken could be recast if seriously objected to by any person as unfair! Shaker Mountain's students came from widely divergent backgrounds, as do ours, and this sort of built-in flexibility prevented some purely majority decisions that might have been unfair to unpopular individuals. Interestingly, it is my belief that Em Pariser's Community School in Camden, Maine, which functions as a therapeutic rehabilitation center for high school dropouts, although it does not describe itself as "democratic" *per se,* operates very much on the basis of genuine respect for each student, and mandates equal respect for staff. I'm still not sure which function is "baby" and which is "bath water," but I do know that it is a *person*-centered school function, not an exclusively *policy*-centered one, regardless of the self-definitions offered by an individual school.

In actuality, because problems which come out of dysfunctional patterns tend to arise repeatedly in the school community, and because members of the community grow to view each other as members of a family, injustice seldom becomes a factor in a self-styled democratic school. It is very clear, reading Neill's comments on being a teacher, that his model was one of kindness, self-respect and blazing honesty, both with himself and with his students. The "end product" of Summerhill is, thus, not, in my opinion, so much a result of any *particular* pattern of governance *per se* as it is of Neill's own character in action! I would hope we can say the same for ourselves, both staff and kids. Time will tell. So far (finishing up our 26th year), we have a pretty good record among graduates. Lots of them, including a number we never would have predicted would do so, come back to share with us their glowing sense of success in their lives!

I've not heard the analysis of what makes a school a good one put this way by other people who've written about Summerhill, and maybe it's just too obvious to comment on—but I want to anyway, being a devotee of Wilhelm Reich. Perhaps it's an American characteristic to try to plug in a formula, whether for raising a child or for running a school! Neill makes it very clear that he greatly admired Homer Lane and saw himself as carrying on Lane's way of working with kids. Having a deep sense of inner connectedness with a person—whether that person be Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, Wilhelm Reich, A.S. Neill or George Dennison—is *not* what I am referring to as only tangentially relevant. To me, loving, admiring, learning from, being inspired by, even agreeing with *the person* is quite different from imitating a formula that worked for that person as an general "how-to" for running a school. Thus, it's not admiring Sylvia Ashton-Warner or John Dewey that bothers me, but the impulse to replicate their "techniques" that I find disturbing. The "Progressive Education" schools of the twenties and thirties that allegedly patterned themselves after Dewey's principles only worked for a very select population. By and large, so do the Montessori and Waldorf schools of today. It strikes me that, indirectly, our American adulatory tendencies stem at least as much from class and race prejudice as anything, and that they are based on denial, among other things, as Jonathan Kozol said of the small rural "free schools" of the sixties and seventies.

Don't get me wrong! It has never occurred to me to accuse Neill of latent prejudice against working class kids! That's not what I heard him saying when he wrote me that he would have thought himself "daft to try." He was looking at his own strengths and desires, not something theoretical or ideological.

That's an American characteristic. I have a feeling that our culture fosters ideological patterns, and that these patterns may lead to the kind of adulative imitation I'm referring to, perhaps more than happens in at least some other cultures. From the behaviorist John Watson in the twenties to Gesell and Spock in the forties and Berry Brazelton in the seventies and eighties, we Americans seem to need a framework for understanding child development or childhood learning that comes from someone we can put on a pedestal as knowing something we don't—and that person can be almost anyone except our parents! As a people we seem almost totally cut off from our parents, from the continuity of generational patterns of doing things, from our many ethnic heritages! Lacking roots, we tend to revere "how-to" books on everything from giving birth to raising kids to choosing the right way to educate them to making a marriage work to "the American Way of Death" à la Jessica Mitford!

Lately we've had a rash of non-governmental schools popping up everywhere based on somebody's ideas about learning, whether Montessori, Steiner, Emilia Reggio (whoever she is!), John Dewey, even Dan Greenberg, who sells a kit!—of government-sponsored ones based on the varied formulas mandated by state departments of education and collectively designated as "charter" schools—of various denominational groups' ideas of what constitutes Christian education—and Lord only knows what else! Any one of them may be, perhaps indeed is!, a wonderful place for children—but my belief is that what makes the difference between a school that is good for kids and one that isn't—and this will include any of the above models—has to do with *people*—the people who set the tone and administer the rules, the families who send their kids there, and the kids themselves! If the kit or the formula helps, hey, do it! We gotta start somewhere! I had a lot of half-baked ideas when I started ours based on various people's beliefs. Fortunately, I—we—were independent enough to be in a position to pick, choose, modify, discard, invent, elaborate our very own way quite soon in the game. Like democracy, freedom is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a school to have! Freedom to be sufficient must translate into *people*!

With that belief as an ending, it only remains to say, long live Summerhill, the most non-ideological, people-based place for kids I know—a place where people of all ages can just be themselves and be loved and accepted as OK so long as they don't invade anyone else's space or fail to respect their on-going investment in their own lives. What else does one need? As Bears Kaufman puts it, "To love is to be happy with." In the *realest* sense of the word—unsentimentally, that is—Summerhillians, like Free Schoolers, are happy people.

***I was very touched by receiving the following request for free ad space by the* FRIENDS OF SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS, with whom I had done business as a purchaser of the journal. I think it was the openness of their approach to community funding that moved me, so I hastened to agree to run their ad. Hope you make it, folks!**

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Ron Miller, author of the following article, is the founder and editor emeritus of Holistic Education Review *and author of several books on education including* What Are School For?: Holistic Education in American Culture; New Directions in Education: Selections from *Holistic Education Review*; The Renewal of Meaning in Education: Responses to the Cultural and Ecological Crisis of our Times *and, most recently,* Educational Freedom in a Democratic Society. *This article is based on excerpts from a review essay Ron wrote for the spring edition of his annotated catalogue called* Great Ideas in Education, a Unique Book Review and Resource Catalog for Educators, *available from Ron's Resource Center for Redesigning Education in Brandon, VT. See the end of this essay for more information on ordering books from the Center.*

THE RENEWAL OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE:
A Multifaceted Task
by Ron Miller

It is obvious to nearly everyone by now that modern American society has entered a period of grave crisis. In almost every realm of social life, we are beset by uncertainty and apparent decline. Our economic system is funneling vast wealth to a few but cannot provide quality employment to most people. Our political system has been poisoned by special interest lobbying and right wing demagoguery. Suspicion and resentment between races is on the rise, moral and ethical values are up for grabs, and the young generation is steeped in the nihilism and consumerism purveyed by the mass media. These are tragic and dangerous times.

How can we in education respond to this crisis? Certainly, we cannot ignore it and hope to conduct business as usual in the schools. Virtually every classroom in America has been affected by the social and political upheaval swirling outside the schoolhouse door: Children come to school neglected to a greater or lesser degree by overstressed and fragmented families, mesmerized by television and popular culture, and brutalized by the corruption and violence that permeate this culture. Taxpayers revolt against public services while politicians and corporate leaders issue strenuous new demands for "excellence" and accountability, such as the ominous totalitarian schemes for national goals and mandated outcomes. Conservative religious activists are winning seats on school boards and censoring books while people from traditionally disenfranchised groups demand more inclusion and visibility. Clearly, education can offer no simple answer to this troubling cultural disintegration and realignment.

However, there are visions of social and educational renewal that point toward paths out of this confusion. There are educators with unusual imagination, moral passion, and intellectual courage who are looking beyond the mere techniques of teaching and managing schools to examine the deeper roots of our malaise ... progressive educators who see public schools as laboratories of democracy, alternative educators who question the agenda of state schooling, holistic educators who emphasize the spiritual nature of the child or the urgency of the environmental crisis, and educational philosophers who raise substantial concerns *about* the modernist epistemology underlying American schools. We believe that *all* of these responses to the modern crisis are worth considering and, indeed, worth acting upon. The task before us requires a multifaceted response.

Yet, the variety of these responses can itself be confusing. How can one simultaneously support public schools as democratic public spheres and also look to radical alternatives for inspiration? How is an educator to prioritize such fundamental goals as social justice, personal growth, and ecological literacy? The purpose of this ... essay is to outline a holistic framework for considering and acting upon these multiple visions of cultural and educational renewal. ... It is based upon the idea that human beings experience the world at *multiple levels of wholeness:* A holistic view recognizes that all phenomena have meaning when they are considered in larger contexts, which themselves are meaningful according to still larger contexts. The diverse visions for educational renewal do not contradict each other, but are relevant to different contexts of experience, different levels of meaning. We need them all.

To begin with, we need to be concerned with the wholeness and integrity of the individual. In educational terms, this has often been referred to as teaching "the whole child." Humanistic and child-centered educators have emphasized this perspective since the time of Rousseau and Pestalozzi, seeing the human being as a complex organism arising from the dynamic interplay of psychological, emotional, social, spiritual and other vital energies. The great educational pioneers Rudolf Steiner and Maria Montessori emphasized this view of human nature, as have more recent thinkers like Carl Rogers; recent theories of multiple intelligences and learning styles express a similar attitude in scientific rather than moral/philo-sophical language. One of the primary roots of our cultural crisis is the contrary, reductionistic view that young people are merely "intellectual capital"—a national resource or raw material for the industrial economy; this understanding, firmly grounded in behaviorist psychology, dismisses any appreciation for the living wholeness of human beings as "romantic" and sentimental. ...

The wholeness of the individual person is irreducible, and must not be lost in the face of other concerns and agendas. In other words, it is no less important than achieving a multicultural democracy or raising environmental awareness. But the expression of individual wholeness is always relative to larger contexts, such as family, community, society, and history. Personal growth and integration are highly problematic in a dysfunctional or authoritarian social environment. Consequently, we need to be concerned with integrity and wholeness at the level of community. Is the classroom environment conducive to freedom, honest communication, and genuine caring? Does the school culture nourish such an environment within the classroom? Does the neighborhood or local political climate support such a school? Do the dominant social and economic institutions allow for such a climate in local affairs? We are in crisis today because our social and educational practices force us to answer "No!" to each of these questions. ...

Yet the possibilities for community are deeply affected by the next level of meaning, the ideological sphere, where a society's political power and economic resources are divided and distributed. Radical educators from the social reconstructionists of the 1930's to the critical pedagogy theorists of today have maintained that the modern system of corporate capitalism involves far more than the democratic-sounding notion of "free enterprise": it actually engenders a hierarchical ordering of society that supplies special privileges to a small group of élites while ensuring that others—particularly people of color and lower socioeconomic classes—have limited access to meaningful power or wealth. Numerous historical and sociological studies have demonstrated how schooling has been deliberately and effectively used as a social sorting mechanism. Testing, grading, tracking, authoritative textbooks, monocultural curricula, skill-centered literacy devoid of meaning, the "hidden curriculum" of school architecture, management and routines, and the drastically unequal funding of public schools in different communities all contribute to the power of education to reinforce an essentially elitist ideological vision. Educational renewal must include a serious effort to build a more participatory democratic society. ...

Unfortunately,... conflict at the ideological level often obscures other contexts of meaning, such as the daily lives and concerns of students and their families. Many of the strongest calls for democratic social change (such as the "critical pedagogy" literature) seem preoccupied with abstract principles and society's role in shaping people, and tend to overlook the more personal meanings of individuals' and families' experience. Meanwhile, many "child-centered" reformers tend to avoid the harshness of political conflict altogether, fueling their critics' charge that they are simply romantics. ...

The ideological level of meaning—the context of social and economic institutions—has often been seen as the ultimate source of the problems of the modern age. But recently, more theorists have begun to recognize that institutions reflect a deeper, more pervasive and habitual level of meaning, which is known as worldview or culture. The modern state and corporate capitalism did not arise as historical accidents—they are the inevitable manifestations of deep-seated beliefs about the nature of reality (epistemology), about human nature, and about ultimate values (theology and ethics). In just the past fifteen years, a number of cultural historians have begun to examine the worldview that emerged in Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the modernist worldview of materialism, competitive individualism and scientific reductionism. Authors such as Morris Berman, Theodore Roszak, Carolyn Mer-chant, Jeremy Rifkin and Thomas Berry have been joined by leading edge scientists including Fritjof Capra, David Bohm, Rupert Sheldrake, and others in questioning the adequacy, wisdom, and long-term viability of this modern worldview. According to their analysis, the social and ecological crisis of our time stems directly from the reductionistic worldview we have inherited from Francis Bacon, René Descartes and those who stood to profit from their teaching that nature is an inert resource to be exploited.

This critique of modern culture has led many of us to recognize additional contexts or levels of meaning which had been rendered virtually invisible to people in industrialized societies. We are gaining a new appreciation for the ecological context of human existence: Beyond the technologies that have fashioned our artificial world, beyond our cultural forms, our lives ultimately depend on the health (the integrity and wholeness) of the planetary ecosystem. Humans are one interdependent element, not the master, of the vastly complex system of plant and animal species, atmospheric chemistry, soil, water, and energy that make up the "biotic community," as it was called by the pioneer environmentalist Aldo Leopold. Traditional, premodern cultures held their relationship to nature as sacred ... but industrialized people need to learn how to make a difficult transition from modernity to an ecological postmodern culture. ... Given the reductionistic culture from which we are struggling to emerge, the principles of ecological thinking challenge many of our assumptions and even some of the visionary goals of educators concerned with other levels of meaning we have been reviewing here.

Finally, there is still another context of meaning that is essential to the renewal of culture and education, although it too, thanks to our reductionistic worldview, is unfamiliar and out of place in modern society. This is the spiritual dimension of human existence. When holistic educators refer to the spiritual aspect of an individual's wholeness, they mean that the vital force which animates one's personality is not an objectifiable psychological or biological process but a deeply creative, self-unfolding, purposeful, meaning-seeking spark of consciousness that in some mysterious way connects the person directly to the vast evolving drama of the cosmos. This drama is larger than any other context in which we play out our lives, and in fact is what makes meaning possible in any of them. A culture that places less value on spiritual experience than on economic growth and technology is necessarily an impoverished and decadent culture.

Does this mean, then, that we need to bring religion back into education? A holistic answer would be that we do need to reclaim the essence of religious concern—spirituality—but that the numerous forms this could take would depend heavily on cultural, ideological and personal circumstances. School prayer may well be an appropriate response for many people, but it certainly is not for all. [For many thoughtful people] spirituality is nourished, not through formal rituals that students practice in school, but by the *quality of relationship* that is developed between person and world. We can, and must, cultivate an attitude of caring, respect, and contemplation to replace the narrow modernist view that the world is a resource to be exploited. This simple but profound change in attitude is the essential ingredient of all the emerging visions of cultural and educational renewal.

Call 1-800-639-4122 (Fax 1-802-247-8312) or write PO Box 298, Brandon, VT 0298 for a copy of the Great Ideas catalogue. Currently, there are seventy titles on his list (including both volumes of Challenging the Giant) plus one journal, HER, and ten videos (including Dorothy Fadiman's splendid "Why Do These Kids Love School?" which is becoming hard to find). Not bad for an idealist. As Ron says, this list is for "educators," not just "people." I know how important to academic types the use of professional jargon is. I was a grad student! Learning to use it is part of the hazing process. But I'm not suggesting that "educators" are uneducable! In fact, I believe it's getting easier as we go along—as the educational illusions about "what works" fall increasingly by the wayside. Re-reading Ron's last paragraph above, it's clear that he, at least, is doing his own "homework," which is all one can ask of a person! So, I may be a bit cynical—it sometimes seems pretty hopeless, trying to get from "here" to "there,"—but it looks like we gotta keep on keepin' on.

Here's one perspective (by e.e. cummings) on our all too human enterprise:

pity this busy monster manunkind,

not. Progress is a comfortable disease:
your victim (death and life safely beyond)

plays with the bigness of his littleness
—electrons deify one razor blade

into a mountainrange; lenses extend
unwish through curving wherewhen till unwish

returns on its unself.
A world of made

is not a world of born—pity poor flesh
and trees, poor stars and stones, but never this

fine specimen of hypermagical
ultra-omnipotence. We doctors know

a hopeless case if—listen: there's a hell
of a good universe next door; let's go.

—e.e. cummings, "XIV", from *1 x 1*

Two books by Patrick Farenga:

The Beginner's Guide to Homeschooling:
Learning as a Family is Different from Learning in School **and**
Teenage Homeschooler: College or Not?
GWS Publications (Growing Without Schooling)
Holt Associates Inc.
2269 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140, pb, $7.95 and $2.95 respectively

Reviewed by Ellen Becker,
member of *ΣΚΟΛΕ*'s editorial staff

These two booklets are excellent introductions to a very different realm: that of homeschooling. To someone educated in the public school system, it can seem quite scary to let go of all that structure and trust in yourself and your kids. I know because I was educated in the public school system and then sent my children to an inner city alternative school known as The Free School, with no grades, no set curriculum, shaped largely by what the children are interested in, with loose class groupings, a child-run council-meeting system for handling problems, and an approach that adapts the school to the child rather than the other way around—in itself a very different realm with many similarities to home schooling. So I know the fears of letting go of the familiar and embarking into the unfamiliar. These books are a bridge into that realm—homeschooling.

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Beginner's Guide consists of 28 pages of text and 20 pages of appendices. In the text, Pat Farenga, the author, acknowledges that he stands in the large shoes of John Holt and pilots the organization (Holt Associates) and the magazine (*Growing Without Schooling*) John Holt founded to support homeschooling after he had concluded that schools themselves could not be reformed. Pat Farenga traces the growth of what we call homeschooling (after pointing out that before compulsory schooling 150 years ago, learning at home was the primary means of educating the young) drawing his information primarily from Holt's 1981 book entitled *Teach Your Own: A Hopeful Path for Education.*

The booklet is a guide for how to do it. Mr. Farenga gives plenty of support to parents who wish to homeschool along the model of the public school system, but his aim is to show us how learning in a family setting can be different and to instruct us on its benefits. He is careful to repeat that there are as many ways to homeschool as there are families that do it, and to urge parents to follow their own preferences.

Farenga touches on curriculum lightly again and again throughout the book, providing plenty of resources for developing however detailed a plan you want, but basically he says that whereas you may need a plan, you do not need to have one drawn up in precise detail. The whole opportunity for learning within a family setting is to be flexible. You can draw up your plan to suit your preference, say for example, a school-like setting, and then change it as you become more comfortable with less structure. It can adjust to life circumstances like a new baby, and it can follow your child's interests wherever they may lead.

For those who do want to follow the public school model, he has within the appendices two pages that refer parents to correspondence schools, curriculum suppliers and private schools that either enroll or help homeschoolers in various ways, and eight pages of references to learning materials and resources in twelve different areas ranging from arts, crafts and films, to foreign languages to music to writing.

For those who want a looser "interest driven, child-led, natural, organic learning" (p. 19) or unschooling, as he calls it, he points out that homeschoolers learn "through reading, through conversation, through solitary reflection, through play, through outside classes, through volunteer work and apprenticeships." (p. 10). The booklet is filled throughout with personal anecdotes, all taken from the magazine *Growing Without Schooling*, of families and how they have approached one problem or another—from record-keeping to supporting a child whose interest in science has outstripped his parents' competence level.

He spends time reassuring parents that you don't have to be a qualified teacher either for your kids' sake or for legal requirements, citing studies showing that children who stayed at home with their parents were persistent logical thinkers, asking a lot of questions about all sorts of things, whereas children in a classroom setting of the same age were more passive, tending only to respond to questions asked by the adults rather than posing questions themselves. He reassures parents that children homeschooled test just as well as non-homeschooled.

He describes the structural concerns of scheduling, record-keeping and evaluation in the same easy-going approach. Scheduling, he says, often involves the children's getting used to the freedom they suddenly have by taking a break and then gradually focusing more on specific areas they wish to learn about. As often with this booklet, he quotes from parents' actual experiences and lists resource books. Recording-keeping can meet state requirements without becoming burdensome. He gives examples for parents who are unschooling of how to translate "what one is going to do anyway into language the school officials can understand" (p. 25). For evaluations, he begins with a disclaimer of the value of evaluations and then discusses the four forms of evaluation that homeschoolers typically deal with and how to approach them: standardized tests, portfolio assessments, progress reports and performance assessments.

Getting down to brass tacks, he suggests that you: learn your state's law or regulations (by contacting homeschooling groups in your area—he provides a four-page list in the appendices of homeschool groups both within and outside the United States); develop your curriculum; and (characteristically for Pat Farenga) remember to enjoy your family.

Basically, his aim, as he states in his introduction and his conclusion, is to introduce parents to a form of learning that "can be inherently different than traditional schooling" (p. 28). He has lived this different form of learning (he and his wife, Day, homeschool their three daughters) and his love for it shines through the pages:

> Just as children learn to walk and talk without formal instruction as babies and toddlers, so can they learn through the incidents of their lives as children and teenagers. Parents provide resources, support, travel, safe environments, guidance, and, when desired, direct instruction for their children. So parents have a very important, though different, role as "teacher" when using the "live and learn" approach to homeschooling (p. 3).

• • •

Although the title of the second booklet is *Teenage Homeschoolers: College or Not?,* its real focus is advice to teenagers on choosing their life's work. It is equally good advice for adults wrestling with the same question, and it doesn't trivialize the issue.

Farenga basically advises teenager to look at college purely in terms of its usefulness to their ultimate goals in life. He gives plenty of examples of people who have succeeded without it, and points out that employers want people who can actually do things, whether they have a degree or not. If you want to work in a field where a college degree is a necessity, like becoming an M.D., then it makes sense to prepare for it. Even then, he advises, if you think you want to work in a field that requires a college degree, get some exposure to that area of work *before* you go to college. He says the costs for college are bordering on the astronomical and the financial commitment is too great to go into it uninformed. Furthermore, he cites the statistic of an ABA survey of lawyers, 41% of whom said they would choose another, more satisfying profession, but for the cost of their education, their mortgages and other commitments.

For those homeschoolers who answer the question of *College or Not?* with a "Yes," he walks them through the steps they need to take to apply successfully: from developing a transcript, to taking tests, if needed, to interviewing, to writing essays and getting recommendations, to getting an actual diploma if that turns out to be required.

For those who answer the question with "I'm not sure" or "No," he spends the rest of the booklet, describing ways to pursue their interests. A key element in this advice is to explore any area that you think you're interested in by calling up people in the field and going to talk to them, to observe them at work and to volunteer. He urges teenagers to explore their hobbies, talents and extracurricular interests for links to work as well. He urges them to travel.

The very end of the booklet is devoted to a discussion about jobs, careers and work. Pat Farenga quotes John Holt as saying a job is something you do because you need the money, but something you probably wouldn't do it otherwise. A career is a stepladder of jobs. About work, he quotes John Holt as saying:

> By "work" I mean something altogether different, what people used to call a "vocation" or calling—something which seemed so worth doing for its own sake

> that they would have gladly chosen to do it even if they didn't need money and the work didn't pay...to find our work, in this sense, is one of the most important and difficult tasks that we have in life, that unless we are very lucky we cannot expect to find it quickly, and indeed, that we may never find it once and for all, since work that is right for us at one state of our life may not be right for us at the next......the vital question "What do I really want to do? What do I think is most worth doing?" is not one that the schools will often urge us or help us to ask of ourselves; on the whole, they feel it is their business only to prepare us for employment—jobs or careers, high or low. So we are going to have to find out for ourselves what work needs to be done out there, and which of that work we most want to take part in.

Pat Farenga echoes John Holt by concluding:

> I will try to sum up all I've said in just one sentence: find for yourself not just a degree, a job or a career for your own personal gain, but work worth doing, forge a life worth living, and thereby make this world a better place than it was before you found your work.

And here's a letter plus a reflective piece from another of our favorite correspondents: Dr. Bill Kaul, PhD, teacher, child advocate and sheep herder extraordinaire—or, as he calls himself, "high desert varmint":

Howdy from the arid acres! Hope all's okey-dokey with you and yours in these days of Gingrichian Horrorfest. I had a very frightening dream the other night in which I had somehow ended up with the dead body of Bob Dole in my living room. (I hadn't killed him; I don't know how it got there.) I spent the rest of my dream trying to fob the corpse off on someone else. By the time I had to arise, I still hadn't been successful. It was an ugly and frightening thing. that dream. but not without its points of instruction for me. I don't know if there are any for you, but I pass it on anyway.

Other than that, things are pretty quiet around here. My sheep are fat even in the winter, and we have plenty of good things to eat. The institutions only nibble at my toes and I shake them off with a laugh for the most part.

Peace upon you: may your tribe prosper: may your flocks increase.

Bill Kaul
PO Box 698
Waterflow, NM 87421
(505) 598-5958

OF LOADS AND CARRYING

by Bill Kaul

It had been magic. He could feel the eagle's claws in his shoulders. carrying him lightly where he went. Surely it would always be this way.

The load of childhood was on his back, and he didn't know he was carrying it. It was light and it seemed to hit. He could even jog with it, run along with his companions and fly through the air if need be. He hadn't flown yet, but felt that he could if he needed to. He didn't know that the childhood load would grow with him if it was left alone to simply grow; he didn't even know he carried a load. He was light as a feather, and saw everything in brilliant color and stark blacks and whites.

But people knew what he was thinking. It was all in books, clearly lined out in stages...

One day these bigger and smarter people came along to the child. It was time. they said, and began placing new items into his unfelt load. These items were not parts of a childhood load. not simple desires and wishes, uncomplicated worries—no. These were bits and pieces of a fully-grown load, a load that the adults who had been carrying it found onerous and heavy. They had not been able to find another adult who would take these bits of their load. so they found him, a child, easily coerced—and simply added these bits to his load. It was all in the book. It was good; it was the way things were supposed to go.

The child felt the task accomplished upon him. It was then that he realized he carried a load. The act of someone large and frightening. saying comforting things while intimating pain, adding things to his load, the weight and pressure of the heavy adult bits on his shoulders and back and legs, the looks of sadness and relief on the faces of the bigger people. these things told the child that he did, in fact. carry a load, and that it could be added to—more: That it would be added to, it had to be this way.

The idea of refusal had not occurred to him yet. That he could shrug off all save his own load was an unknown possibility at this time. So he carried it.

Originally, the adults who had found these bits of their own loads so heavy had been like the child, you know—they had been unaware of their loads. The same adding process had been accomplished with them: "You need to know these things to be successful." they'd heard. "You must accomplish this or be a failure," they'd been told. And their own spindly legs had bowed with the new bits.

It seemed an inevitable process—the load, the weight of it, was necessary for progress. We have to shoulder it bravely and try to carry more than our neighbor, many said. Most believed that, or acted as if they did. We will help you balance the load, some people said. Come to us. We will add important things to your load, others said. Come to us. Share your load with others, they shouted. It's in the books. how to do it...

And so the loads grew, and the young backs became bent, the young brains feverish with new complicated and expensive desires. and business boomed.

Progress flourished everywhere.

But the child who had just had his first taste of burden knew nothing of that bit about progress and necessity—it would be added later.

For now, all he knew was that there is no angel to help carry the load. He had been told—there are no eagles perched on your shoulders to help you walk straight and fly in the sky. That is silly. Straighten up and fly right.

And Bill offered us:

SAYINGS FROM THE TAO

If you want to become whole, let yourself be partial.

If you want to become straight, let yourself be crooked.

If you want to become full, let yourself be empty.

If you want to be reborn, let yourself die.

If you want to be given everything, give everything up.

The Master, by residing in the Tao, sets an example for all beings. Because he doesn't display himself, people can see his light. Because he has nothing to prove, people can trust his words. Because he doesn't know who he is, people recognize themselves in him. Because he has no goal in mind, everything he does succeeds.

When the ancient Masters said,

> **"If you want to be given everything, give everything up," they weren't using empty phrases. Only in being lived by the Tao can you be truly yourself.**

Express yourself completely, then keep quiet. Be like the forces of nature: when it blows, there is only wind; when it rains, there is only rain; when the clouds pass, the sun shines through.

If you open yourself to the Tao, you are at one with the Tao and you can embody it completely. If you open yourself to insight, you are at one with insight and you can use it completely. If you open yourself to loss, you are at one with loss and you can accept it completely.

Open yourself to the Tao, then trust your natural responses; and everything will fall into place.

Thanks, Bill!

If it seems to the readers of ΣΚΟΛΕ that we are publishing Chris' book in its entirety before it's even hit the bookstores, well, in a sense that's nearly true—but I can assure you that each chapter we've received has been scrutinized for relevancy before it appears in these pages! Our "problem" has been that it fits so fully what we keep trying to say about kids, families, teaching and learning that we simply have to have it! This final excerpt says it all!

MAKING IT UP AS WE GO ALONG

by Chris Mercogliano

Conclusion:

...With the arrival of second-generation students and teachers, it appears certain that the Free School will be around for years to come. We will continue modeling true community-based education for an increasingly polarized and atomized nation; and we will go on providing safe haven to a handful of those children who are in danger of falling victim to the dark shadow of our compulsory education system, as well as fostering the growth of a certain number of children who would probably fare well in most any setting. Given the steadily increasing number of calls, letters and visits from people interested in discovering real alternatives to the standard version of school—despite the waves of conservatism currently washing over American society—it seems we are answering a genuine need for us to keep making it up as we go along in our one hundred and thirty year-old building on Elm St.

Meanwhile, several questions remain in the air as I attempt to conclude this tale. First of all, does honoring the above-stated principles require the pattern of organization called "school?" Hardly. Schools, as Ivan Illich and successors like John Holt and later John Taylor Gatto have pointed out, nearly always have—and always will—set themselves up in opposition to most or all of them. While some schools do a better job than others of avoiding what Illich calls "the corrosive effects of compulsory schooling," the fact remains that generations of state-enforced, centrally-managed education have quite literally schooled our modern minds, both individual and collective, out of the ability to picture things differently. In other words, the current generation of parents is almost entirely dependent on the notion of "schooling" as it now exists, having so thoroughly internalized the myths of school: that education is a scarce commodity of which a prescribed amount must "be gotten" before a person is declared to be a competent adult (Illich, Farenga), that children learn only in the company of professionally trained and licensed teachers (Holt), and that the system of public education in this country is a democratic institution, which with only a little more tinkering, will one day soon begin delivering life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to its adherents (Gatto).

If all of this anti-school sentiment be on the mark—and I believe that it is—then the next question is, "So why the Free School?" The easy way out here, of course, would be to say that we are not really a school at all (we aren't free either, being tuition-based); but instead are a community, as I attempted to demonstrate in the chapter by that name. And while I stand by those assertions, we are nonetheless a school after all, imperfect at best and always struggling with the paradoxes and competing urges which underlie the whole business in the first place. Furthermore, some of our kids' parents would prefer that we were more of a school than we actually are, and all very much want and need us to contribute to the raising of their children to the extent that we do. In return we try very hard not to cause separation between them. Finally, instead of "giving kids an education," which implies some sort of passive exchange; or in some way "preparing them for the future," which is sure to instill a sense of ennui and futility, we try equally hard to unite the active principles of living and learning.

All of which leads to yet another unanswered question. If the Free School's approach to education is even half as efficacious as I have described in the preceding pages, then why don't we find parents lining up at our door to enroll their kids? The answer is a complex one, many of the component parts of which have already been addressed. What remains to be said is simply that not everyone wants their children to have fun in school, to construct their own problems to which they create their own solutions—and perhaps herein lies the crux of the matter—*to be free to be themselves.* I lifted that well-worn phrase straight from the mission statement which the older students in the school just recently wrote for a literary magazine they're starting up in order to raise money for a cross-country train trip.

Of course the reason for this widespread reluctance to entrust children with the responsibility for their own growth leads us right back around the circle to Illich, Holt and Gatto. So many of us have been so deeply conditioned to be cautious and fearful followers that the idea of setting our own kids free is then perceived as some sort of ultimate threat. And according to what I hear from friends and associates whose kids are now doing their learning at home, the push and pull between the urge to control and shape their children and the willingness to let them go their own way is very much the same. In any event, it behooves us all to remember that a schooled approach to learning, one which involves textbooks, lesson plans and rote exercises is at best an approximation of any true and lasting experience of the real-for-sure world.

In order to turn back the rising tide of artificiality, we have no choice but to become aware of the gap between ourselves and the true sources of learning, sustenance and meaning in our and our children's lives—all of which our postmodern consumption-driven economy is so hell-bent on luring us away from. Returning to Illich one final time, if the opportunities for learning amidst the everyday world were once again abundant, then there would be no need for education as such. But returning to a romantic notion of the past is unlikely at best. On the national scene, all of the momentum remains in the direction of ever greater standardization and centralization, all in the name of corporate efficiency, and in any event, there is mounting evidence that efforts to radically alter the educational system will always prove futile.

Meanwhile, real change is occurring wherever individuals and small groups are reclaiming responsibility for the raising of their children. Little independent schools like ours are sprouting up all over the place once again, and the number of homeschoolers is growing exponentially. Furthermore, there is increasing collaboration between freeschoolers and homeschoolers as the two somewhat amorphous groups begin to recognize their abundant common ground. Thanks in large part to the homeschool movement, networks of apprenticeship opportunities are forming with the goal of once again enabling adolescents to enter the adult world successfully without being forced to submit to state authority and control. Prestigious colleges and universities are discovering that free- and homeschool "graduates" make fine catches because they are often more worldly and mature—and better educated—than their conventionally schooled counterparts.

And there are signs of people taking back control over the basic means of their lives in other areas as well. For example, increasing numbers of women are fighting for and winning the right to have their babies in the sanctity of their own homes. The term "community-supported agriculture," whereby produce is grown locally (and usually organically) on a subscription basis is coming into common parlance. A number of towns and villages currently are experimenting with various alternatives to money as the basis for the exchange of goods and services, thus taking the idea of bartering a step further than it was in the days of the sixty's and seventy's counterculture.

At the same time, let us not forget that these are largely white, middle class phenomena. As Jonathan Kozol has so starkly portrayed in his most recent two exposes, *Savage Inequities* and *Amazing Grace*, in many ways we remain two separate nations, one white and one not white, and the signs of hope in the increasingly segregated ghettoes of our major cities are few and far between.

In closing, it is becoming clear to me that there really are no grand conclusions to be had regarding the subject at hand. While what we choose to call "education" needs constant reexamination on a great many levels—sociopolitical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual—it is not in and of itself the solution to any of the issues that I have raised in this book. If we look at our nation as being in the throes of a disease state, as Kozol and others would have us do, then suffice it to say that the domain of education and all of the problems associated with it are at the same time symptoms and causes of some greater illness. Or said another way, if the fundamental concern before us is the developmental well-being of our children, then to focus narrowly on the subject of schools, or even more broadly on "education" is to miss the mark entirely, and only serves to reinforce the myth that there exists a prescription for that well-being.

Thus I have told the Free School's story for one primary reason: to hold it up as just one example of how we can support the growth of healthy, sane children and truly endow them with the guarantees written into the Constitution by our forefathers. I will repeat one last time that there is no one right way to do it. To school or not to school is *not* the question. The question, which needs to be asked over and over again, is what is best for *this* child or *that* child, or *my* child? In answering, let us remember two things; first, that the real answer lies largely within each and every child; and second, that the decisions which affect even one child, whether he or she be in Albany, New York or Albany, Oregon or Albany, Georgia also affect children in the darkest and most sequestered slums of our major cities.

In other words, just as there are no single answers, there are no simple ones either. The world always has been filled with injustice and paradox and confusion and danger just as it has with compassion and beauty and courage and hope. What saves humanity again and again is the miracle that within the spirit of human children there exists a hardy seed of wonder and exuberance, one which freeschoolers and homeschoolers alike are determined to preserve for future generations. And that is why, together, we must continue making it up as we go along.

Moumasatou

We sent on to John Taylor Gatto a review which had been sent to us by our favorite contributor to both **The Journal of Family Life** ***and ΣΚΟΛΕ, Alice Howell. See the review in the Spring issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ of her latest book,*** **Conversations with Children** ***and the interview with her which appeared in our sister quarterly,*** **The Journal of Family Life** ***(volume II, no. 2, "Culture"). This review of the*** **JFL** ***appeared in the*** **Berkshire Eagle** ***for Saturday, February 17, 1996. We received the reply from John which follows:***

This "quarterly for empowering families" is published in Albany, N.Y. by a group which 25 years ago founded a "free school" there, and has since developed businesses, mutual support, and consensus about education and parenthood. The magazine, and probably the community, have a Jungian, spiritual emphasis.

In the current issue, Alice Howell is interviewed, while other articles focus on integrating psychotherapy with shamanism; understanding the spiritual progression of historical eras toward our own; and the importance of building community. There's a nice piece about returning home, at different stages of life, by Barbara DeMille, a commentator on WAMC [our regional public radio station].

While Howell's enthusiastic applications of myth to history are engaging, I particularly liked the reprint of radical teacher John Gatto's speech last July at Goddard College. Gatto lays out his renegade view of mass education as part of a centralized government and business bureaucracy that's weaning us of our individuality. In Gatto's view, these bureaucracies have labored for the past hundred years to make us dependent and "incomplete," to undermine democratic individualism with propaganda that removes decision-making from the public sphere into the unelected, unaccountable, bureaucratic ether.

To educators Pareto and Dewey, Gatto compares fascist politicians like Mussolini in their use of scientific management to ensure order and compliance. Liberty, dissent, discussion, and compromise are messy, Gatto says, and they're not conducive to the security of powerful economic interests.

Gatto's ideas sometimes edge perilously toward the anti-government ravings of the right-wing fringe, but there's a lot to think about in this bracing article's challenge to the institutions that govern our lives without accommodating what we think.

And John replied as follows—and if I hear one word of attempted rebuttal from anyone concerning John's comments about the "Christian Right," I will personally denounce them to the Gingrich UnAmerican Activities Committee! And if there isn't one, I shall propose he start one! So there. I feel unashamedly tribal where this fat guy is concerned! To hell with "fairness doctrine!" Oh, and, by the way, Urie Bronfenbrenner agrees with me that we Americans are becoming polarized into opposing camps to the point that we are losing our ability to compromise or negotiate! THAT's what John is saying, in his inimitable, Gattoesque way!

Hurrah for the *Berkshire Eagle*! But some quibbles:

I) Using the word "educator" to describe John Dewey or Wilfredo Pareto is something I would never do; in fact the term doesn't exist at all for me because it commits the rhetorical crime of begging the question and conflates the term schooling and education. You can buy a schooling with clock time, but you can't get an education that way; there are various pretty precise formulae for schooling, but there can be no such for education simply because about 95% of the education it in the head of the learner and outside "teacher" control. You only get an education if you want one and undertake much grueling effort and many *dangerous* risks to get one; any bozo or muleskinner can get schooled. The Unabomber was clearly an educated man, his pursuers well-schooled.

Now if you accept even part of this anti-government raving from a registered member of the right-wing fringe, it follows that conferring the honorific "educator" in the absence of any evidence other than the presentation of a philosophy or a methodology—and without feedback from the involuntary subjects of the procedures—is unwarranted and even dumb. So don't any of you call someone an educator promiscuously anymore, huh? Personally I only call Mary Leue an educator because she has a funny bone and forgives me.

2) Pareto and Dewey were both major fascist *thinkers*, give them their due on that; the big difference was that Pareto knew it and Dewey avoided facing what he was all his life. When he destroyed the crippled writer Randolph Bourne's career during WWI Dewey branded himself. He was much more than a fascist, of course. No complicated spirit fits comfortably under

any rubric, but under the skin of the humanist always beat the heart of an evolutionary evangelist forwarding the cause of good breeding as specified in the work of Anglican parson Malthus and his blood cousins Charles Darwin and Francis Galton. I'm always astonished at how few people have figured out the obvious connection between helping the "favored races" evolve and forced compulsion schooling curriculum intended for the unfavored. Dewey's bread was always buttered by Big Money.

Nor is it necessary to be barbaric or right wing to be a proper fascist. The most successful fascist of the 20th century is the only woman ever to be buried in Westminster Cathedral—Beatrice Webb. Founder of the British Labor Party, the London School of Economics, (Mick Jagger went there), The Economist, New Statesman and of course the guiding spirit of the Fabians. What Bea Webb fans (and I count myself one of them) are usually unaware of is the *interesting* fact that her uncle, her closest friend, her intimate confederate was Herbert Spencer, the leading Darwinian of the 19th century and the originator of our "survival of the fittest" creed. Both Herb and his niece Bea *absolutely agreed on ends*; it was only means in which they differed. Bea wanted the bad breeding stock s...l...o....w...l...y and gently put out of its misery with bread, circuses and welfare; Herb said fuck 'em, sweat the bastards until they're dead. It's true I personally prefer Spencer's kind of gritty honesty to Webb's murderous maternalism but I'd unabomb the pair of them If I knew how (is the correct form "unibomb"? or "unabomb?").

3) I don't know what the right-wing fringe is. Having accepted David Colfax's challenge to me made three years ago at the Sacramento Home School Convention in which he warned me not to accept a speaking invitation from a radical Christian right wing group in Atlanta because "they will lock you in a room, blockade the door and try to convert you."

I have by now spoken before ten Pentecostal groups, about seven seriously Christian homeschool groups and the John Birch Society (once). This is out of five hundred seventeen appearances in forty-nine states and seven foreign countries since July I5, 1991. (That's why I'm fat; all I do is fly, rent cars, write speeches, make speeches, read, eat and drink whisky). I went into this experience with a little trepidation because of David (*Homeschooling for Excellence*)'s caveat. My god, Mary, having lived on the West Side of New York City among textbook liberals for thirty years, knowing many of them as close friends, having gone to Columbia University and Cornell, I thought I knew everything there was to know about close-mindedness, bigotry, violence in word and deed, anger, envy and the rest of the catalogue: what new diabolatry could these... these... Christians... be capable of?! Frankly it made my blood run cold as it does Frank Rich's on the New York Times OP ED page (my favorite Christian-basher so far).

Unfortunately I was let down. A more polite, generous, loving, curious, interesting, open-minded group with lovelier children I never ran into. In Georgia, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, Washington, Oregon, Kansas, etc. I couldn't seem to shake one single violent, bigoted statement out of any of them. DAMN! Finally, when one of the three *founders* of the John Birch Society told me in his home that the group became aware in the early 60's that it wasn't Commie rat bastards screwing up American society but big business interests in alliance with their "progressive" (profitably progressive) friends and that this discovery had caused an avalanche of violently negative characterizations of his group to fill the liberal press (but you and I read Chomsky, don't we, so we know exactly how "liberal" that really is), I just gave up.

I mean, what would *you* do when one of the inner circle of the radical right insisted on making me hear a music recital done exclusively by his eleven grandchildren, ages four to seventeen, when *you* discovered that although an amazingly wealthy man ($300 million?) he insisted on paying his working class employees a "living wage" so that their families could have a stable home life, when *you* discovered that he paid out of his own pocket so that twenty per cent of the enrollment of an elegant private school would be from dirt poor black and Mexican families, and when his own daughter picked *you* up at the airport incubating chicks on the front seat of her pickup truck? I was, naturally, disgusted.

I mean, what in *hell* is going on?! Is it just barely *possible* that the "radical right" is desperately needed to provide a plot for some otherwise sorry-ass lives? I dunno. I was reading into the works of Margaret Sanger the other day and came across this line from the founder of "Planned" Parenthood, "The greatest favor any family could do for society is to put one of its children to death." Well, maybe, Maggie. In the same reading session I ran across a speech Jacques Rousseau gave before a session of UNESCO in which he said (I'm paraphrasing, but closely) "We must find a way quickly to eliminate fifty thousand lives a day. It is terrible to say this, but more terrible not to." Sound good to you? I wonder who he meant by "we"?]

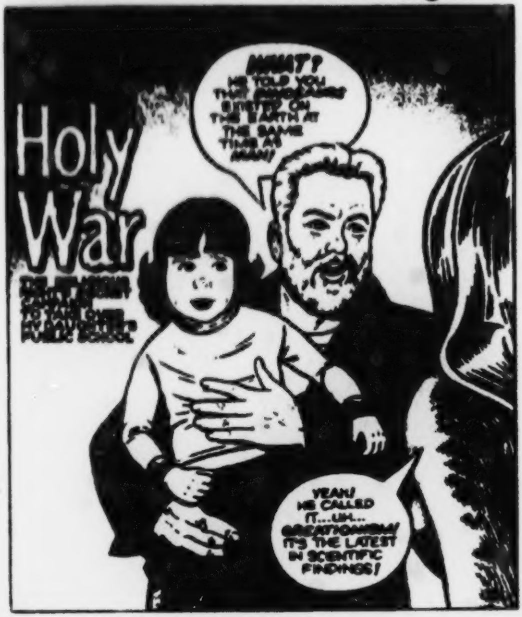
Mary, I better quit before I start raving like the right-wing fringe. Pray for me and write if you get work.

Much love,

John the Baptist

John Taylor Gatto

Mother Jones Strikes Again!


WHAT? HE TOLD YOU THAT DINOSAURS EXISTED ON THE EARTH AT THE SAME TIME AS MAN!
Holy War
YEAH! HE CALLED IT...UH... CREATIONISM! IT'S THE LATEST IN SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS!

If you'd like more of John Gatto's juicy wisdom (plus a lot of other gems, for that matter!), he's got a beautiful discussion he's entitled "Dear Kid," written to his daughter, of what he calls "spirit conversation," coming up in next spring's issue of the **Journal of Family Life**, *our sister quarterly, an issue whose theme is*

"Generations." You may order a subscription by writing: JFL, 72 Philip St., Albany, NY 12202.

A year's subscription costs $20 (for four issues) or a sustainer, for $30, will include a year to ΣΚΟΛΕ *free! Deal? Or you can do it the other way around, extend your* ΣΚΟΛΕ *sub for a year as a sustainer at $30 and receive* JFL *free for a year! Either way, you can't lose!*

Our back issues are a treat too. The topics are "Children in Families," which contains a lengthy interview with John Gatto that has been reprinted in The Sun *and a couple of other periodicals, "Couples," "Birth," "Loss," "Culture," "Mother Earth," and the current one, "Father Sky."*

We were on the runner's-up list of Utne Reader's *best periodicals of 1995 and love to publish personal articles written by readers! "Children" and "Couples" cost $6 each, because they are reprints, the others $5 each. Shipping is included.*

Gad, I'm becoming commercial! It must be catching. Do it anyway.

RAISING A DAUGHTER:
Parents and the Awakening of a Healthy Woman
by Jeanne Elium and Don Elium
Celestial Arts, Berkeley, CA. 1994.
$11.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Betsy Mercogliano,
member of *ΣΚΟΛΕ*'s editorial staff

This is a rich book for all parents of daughters. I was immediately drawn in by the Elium's acknowledgment of how challenging it is to be female in our culturally male times, where worth is often calculated by productivity and measured achievement. As the title suggests, awakening is the authors' focus, both a girl's awakening and parents' awakening to her uniqueness—awakening to the relational inner nature of being female, and awakening to potential stresses in daughter-parent relationships. I valued how the Eliums made clear that being naturally relational and caring does not mean weak, unambitious or acquiescent. They recognize the challenging strength and natural zestiness of girls and women when we are true to our instinctive drives for personal connections and communication. I certainly felt great joy in being female and having two daughters after I read this book!

The book is full of quotes from parents and daughters, expressing their struggles, their memories, their joys in parenting and being parented. There is clear understanding of the different kinds of support girls need from each parent. My husband and I found this thought-provoking and helpful in understanding the different ways our kids relate to us in what might be the same situation. They discuss the difficulties in our cultural stereotypes around mothers and fathers, saying

> ...the culture finds it is easier to blame mothers than to comprehend the entire system that has restricted women. ...Girls must achieve a separate selfhood, but it is a selfhood that develops within the ever-increasing complexity of relationship, especially in relationship with their mothers, with whom they share a commonality that goes beyond the conflicts, entanglements, and misunderstandings so inevitable to family life.
>
> In the past, most of men's time and energies were given to providing for the financial security of their

> families. This left little for taking part in daily family life, and fathers were in the uncomfortable position of weekend father and occasional baby-sitter to give Mom a needed night out. ...Relating to a man who is aloof and uninformed about daily concerns sets up a dangerous pattern between not only fathers and daughters, but also with every other man a girl meets. ...From the moment of birth, daughters need their fathers to recognize and embrace their dreams and ambitions. The world is open to them like never before, and fathers provide models of assurance and competence girls need to follow their hearts' desires. Fathers walk a fine line between valuing their daughters' feminine ways of being and drawing out their masculine qualities and abilities. Without both sides, daughters grow up with something essential missing.

By looking into these cultural stereotypes, the Eliums come to one of their main themes about parenting—the more we as parents want to understand ourselves, our childhoods and our own needs for respect, love, individuation and creativity, especially in our primary relationships, the more we will have to give to our kids. In other words, this book could also be subtitled, *Raising Ourselves.* This is a key to healthy nurturing, especially for girls. Their emphasis on this parental modeling just makes compassionate common sense and is a relief in this time of thousands of "how-to-get-it-perfect-at-parenting" books. They return to this often as they address the developmental stages from cradle to young adulthood.

The Eliums understand the pitfalls of learning about oneself through relationships, noting that while girls thrive within relationships, they can also get lost there by giving themselves away. This natural vulnerability that they point out helped me look at some of the struggles I've had with my two daughters, seeing where I may have pushed too far into their open-heartedness towards me. So, this book sees the delicacy of growing up female in this culture where there are often conflicting messages to women about women—be for yourself, be for others. Sometimes this makes raising a daughter a daunting responsibility, especially when I as a mother am also struggling with the same issue of holding my center in my relationships with others. The Eliums recognize that our own awareness as parents of this ongoing process is really the key to helping our daughters, which takes the sting of perfection out of this apparent quandary.

The book gave me and my husband many opportunities to reflect on the unique strengths and vulnerabilities of each of our daughters in a way that left both of us feeling more connected and in love with each of them. I'll keep *Raising a Daughter* by my bed and read it from time to time as my kids grow. It was written as a tool for reflection without a message that there is a "right way." I'm grateful it's not a manual, but a sensitive exploration.

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ΣΚΟΛΕ

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KIDS' ISSUE

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ΣΚΟΛΕ

the Journal of Alternative Education

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EDITORS' PAGE

Hi, y'all. I've been waking up to the fact that I've not always done very well by you in the past, in not making sure you always get your own issues that have your stuff in them. Sorry about that. Life sometimes gets complicated, as I'm sure you know! I'm quite sure I'll do better from now on.

So, if you want any one issue you didn't get, let me know and I'll send it. And if you want a copy for a friend or your parents or teacher, I've got plenty of extra copies, so feel free!

One other thing. I would love to correspond with you, so I'm putting my screen name here as well as further on in the text of this issue. If you write me, I promise to write back via e-mail.

Here it is:

MarySKOLE@aol.com

Love, Mary

A TEST CANNOT MEASURE MY MIND

by Christopher Dickerson

Christopher Dickerson, a fifth grader at Daroff Elementary School in Philadelphia, won first place (elementary) for this speech in the 16th annual citywide African American History Month Oratorical Competition sponsored by the Philadelphia Board of Education.

Stand in your place boy! How dare you try to learn! Is this the harsh voice of a slave owner trying to make blacks think that they were inferior human beings? Once some people used whips, guns, and laws to keep us enslaved. Today there are scientists trying to convince us with statistics that we are an inferior race. Ever since blacks were forced into slavery, some people have looked for reasons to believe that we are inferior. Once we were told that the Bible said that slavery was acceptable. Now we are expected to believe that an IQ test determines our destiny.

This is another example of how some people interpret statistics to fit their racist beliefs. Once our ancestors were denied an education because some people wanted to keep them ignorant, so they wouldn't revolt against slavery. Today, there are people who are still trying to keep us down by stating that IQ scores show that we are not capable of doing well in school. They believe that there is a superior race. They want us to doubt ourselves.

Despite what the recent book *The Bell Curve* says, African Americans are not permanently doomed by their genes to welfare, poverty, and crime. No one can tell me that we cannot benefit from any help, especially an education.

It is true that our society is divided, but this is not so because of IQ differences. It is true because there are not equal opportunities for jobs and education. It is true because some scientists think that good nutrition, housing, and caring homes do not matter. These people try to discourage us from helping ourselves because they think that it is in our genes that we cannot achieve at high levels. Lucia Herndon in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* described the truth about this attitude when she wrote, " ... to raise the notion that IQ is the great dividing line between not only smart and dumb, but the rich and poor, the employed and unemployed, the black and the white, is not only wrong but dangerous. ... After all, inheriting grandpa's millions sure beats inheriting his IQ."

A person's future depends on many things. What about determination? What about common sense? What about honesty? What about curiosity? What about opportunity? And what about caring for others?

When I hear news about race, class, and intelligence, I am scared to think that a test could be the true measurement of who I am! I refuse to believe it when someone tells me that I cannot achieve because of my genes. My will is more important than my IQ.

Reprinted from OERI Bulletin *for Summer, 1995, US Department of Education by Gene Lehman in his uniquely eclectic periodical newsletter* LUNO *(Learning Unlimited Network of Oregon), 31960 SE Chin St., Boring, OR 97009. Thanks once again, Gene! And keep on writing.*

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AARON SCOTT'S PROTEST

May 1, 1996

At Cherry Rd. School in Syracuse, New York, an uncivil act is being put upon the fifth grade students. At about 12:50, twenty minutes into the lunch period, there is 10 minutes of "quiet time." During this time, the lunch aides sound a buzzer and that is the signal for the entire grade, which is about 160 students, to be totally silent. At the same time, the adults, who inflict this upon us, talk amongst themselves.

Some of us refuse. Most of the students who refuse to be silent, are part of the Civil Rights Activist Organization. This is an organization that I started following this situation. C.R.A.O. is an organization which stands up for children's civil rights.

I, as the president of the C.R.A.O., plan to have a petition signed by the Cherry Rd. student body. If the school does not recognize that we are right, we will hold a peaceful protest around the school. If all of the above fails, we are thinking of hiring a constitutional lawyer to sue the school.

If you feel strongly about the issue, please send your letters to me at: 4576 Ashfield Terr., Syracuse, New York, 13215.

Sincerely,

Aaron R. Scott

Aaron

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THE EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN

by Ben Kastelic, March, 1996

I think that one day our children will think for themselves and not like their parents. They will have their own mind about what they think. I believe that one day our children will think about this quote by Mark Twain, "I never let schooling interfere with my education." I think our education is so much more important than our schooling.

Some kids get mixed up and they think that their schooling is more important. That is what their parents told them so that is what they believe. There are many kids that do not know that their education is being taken over by their schooling. Schooling is the part of the day when the bells ring, tests, notes, and textbooks are used to learn.

Schooling comes and goes but your education will be with you all of your life. Most kids learn more on a field trip then they will learn in a month being at school. As Mr. Rogers says, try something new every day. If you try this you will expand your horizons. It will also help extend your comfort zone. With some children their comfort zone stays the same their whole life. They do not go any further then their parents' comfort zone. Because if the parents will not take a risk then the kids never get to try for themselves.

People think that the children are our future. We are our own future. So why not let the parents teach the children to think for themselves.

From Ben Kastelic, age 14, 9027 East Aster Drive, Scottsdale, AZ, 85260-4507. 8th-9th Combined Grade. The Foothills Academy, Cave Creek, Arizona. The Foothills is a first year Arizona Charter School.

I received the following letter from Arun Toké, the executive editor of Skipping Stones, a Multicultural Children's Magazine, *along with a disk containing the following writings from five of their winners of the 1996 Youth Honor Awards, plus another I particularly liked! We reviewed* Skipping Stones *in the Fall, 1995 issue of* ΣΚΟΛΕ, *and I was delighted to re-connect! Arun wanted me esdpecially to mention the 1997 Youth Honor Award contest, whose theme is "How I'm Making a Difference." The deadline for entering in June 20, 1997.*

Skipping Stones *is a beautiful periodical! I urge you to subscribe and to contribute to it. Future issues will contain units on Japan, Hunger, Multicultural Celebrations, Deaf Culture, Life in 2025, Environmental games and puzzles in English and Spanish, Latin America, Former Soviet Republics, Africa, China, Peace and War, India, Papua New Guinea, and Youth Honor Award Winning Entries. A year's subscription (5 issues) costs $20, or $30 for an institution, in US currency. Single or back issues cost $5, with a low-income discount of 50%or a 25% discount for group rate (5 or more). Send a check to* Skipping Stones, PO Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403-0939. Tel. (541)-342-4956.

OK. *Here are the kids' pieces. Hope you enjoy them as much as I did. Oh, and, by the way, each kid gets a free copy of this issue of* ΣΚΟΛΕ. *You do too, if you send me a contribution!*

DARKNESS LYING AHEAD OF ME

by Patricia R. Chikuni

Life has been a bed of roses from the time I stepped my little foot out into this world. But all this perishes as my mind struggles with what is lying ahead of me. This is of course, the future:

Relatives have passed and friends are deceased. All this is happening within a minute's pace. What a cruel world we are living in. What are we heading for then? Every morning I switch on the radio. All that it ever talks of is hunger, war, earthquakes, diseases and above all, poverty. I see darkness lying ahead of me.

Visions of sleek-headed men, whose bodies are as thin as my pen and legs as weak as a grasshopper's is all that I see in this future. Thinking of all these incurable diseases and violence among different countries, I have a reason to think that only a few are going to survive, struggling with a heavy load on their backs, which they don't deserve. A life that has existed has suddenly become extinct.

I hear cries of hungry children, with huge, protruding eyes, all humble, asking for food and drink to quench their thirst. What do you think? Oh what a cruel world! How much I wish it never existed.

Every morning we hear of earthquakes in India, China and Japan, causing immense destruction of homes as well as people.

People kill each other because of one main thing—money. I surely agree, as one of our proverbs says, that "money is a root of all evil." Men will do anything for money. You will hear of a man who has risked his life hunting for an elephant, only to get ivory, which will give him money. Some people will even eat a poisonous frog for money.

Large forests of trees have been destroyed. Only to make some harmful objects which people use to kill each other. People run out of fuel, and run out of oxygen to breath.

Drugs are being made, which people use to stimulate their brains. They try to make their minds like some electrical devices.

My idea of the future is like a nightmare. It sounds like a dream, that all these evil things are happening. It is hard for me to think that one day, very soon, the world will be walking out.

If I am dreaming, please wake me up because I am frightened. I see darkness lying ahead of me.

Patricia R. Chikuni, 15, lives in Gwanda, ZIMBABWE

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS IN THE YEAR 2025

by Leah Etling

"Greetings, fellow Americans!

Things sure have changed a lot since 1996, haven't they?

The world is now united in universal freedom, with China and North Korea escaping the influence of communism. The voices of the people are truly heard in every government worldwide.

Our fossil fuels are severely limited, but total depletion of the gasoline supply has had positive effects on the ozone layer. Today's major means of transportation are bicycles and battery- powered cars. The popular "bike van" has six rows of seats and is used by companies to encourage their workers to "bike pool." This transportation craze has been a boon to the health of people worldwide. As well as encouraging physical fitness, slower speeds has led to fewer accidents.

Drug use has all but disappeared due to the success of education and rehabilitation programs. In addition, a crackdown on crime has discouraged the exchange of guns for illegal substances. Our schools have relentlessly encouraged alternatives to drug use, including recreation and higher learning opportunities. They are to be accoladed for their success.

The issue of nuclear war has disappeared as every nuclear weapon has been defused in joint agreements between nations. This move towards peace is perhaps the most heartwarming development to occur over the last thirty years.

A trend towards vegetarianism has resulted in more land for housing and a better life for cattle, poultry and fish. These industries continue to thrive but on a smaller, healthier scale. Growing organic grains and legumes has become profitable for many farmers which makes for a healthier world diet.

Housing costs have risen due to widespread inflation, yet the elimination of gas and other transportation costs has freed people's funds for housing. The "slow growth" theory advocates population and building quotas to ensure a balance of people, homes and open spaces.

Advanced science and technology has improved earthquake detection immensely. Sensors under the Earth's crust can detect tremors days before their arrival, and provide advance warning.

Our space exploration program is flourishing, and we have discovered two new planets. The possibility of humans living in space becomes more of a reality each year. Our "Spacesphere" program, which will transport astronauts to another planet for one year of self-sustained living, is nearing completion.

Nintendo's bankruptcy led to the rerouting of Japanese technological expertise to the Internet and Information Superhighway. In stark contrast to thirty years ago, today everyone is linked by their computers. Technology has been incorporated into schools as well, and although computers cannot replace teachers, they do bring valuable information into the classroom. The widespread availability of technology has led to a sharp drop in prices. Computers are now only twenty dollars, and everyone's bicycle comes with a handlebar monitor and cellular phone.

It's obvious that hundreds of positive changes have been made in the past thirty years. Looking back, there may have been dark days when we thought the world as we knew it would never prevail. Thankfully, that is not the case. A Latin proverb states: 'Times change, and we change with them too.' In the next thirty years, we will continue to see change reshape our world. If we work together, that change can continue to make the world a better place.

This is your first woman president saying, thank you, and goodnight."

—Leah Etling, 16, Santa Ynez, California. She writes, "I am of Danish and Russian descent...and captain of both the track and cross country teams at Santa Ynez Valley High. I plan to major in journalism in college."

THE BLUE BIRD

by Mikaela Crank

I looked through my bedroom window and glanced up at the glowing stars. Then I shut my eyes to sleep. While sleeping, I had a dream that I was in the year 2025, and I was a blue bird who could see far like an eagle, fly fast like a rocket, and was as beautiful as a rainbow. I flew down in the bright red canyon to find crumbs that the tourists had left.

When I got to the ground I saw no trees or living creatures. I wondered what had happened to everything. Then I realized that there had been a terrible drought all over Navajo country. I flew out and spotted a Navajo home, a hogan. I stared through the window and saw people starving, and their skins were turning darker each moment because of the bright Sun. I finally realized that because of the Sun's heat there was no water, no crops to grow and no electricity. It seemed no one would help anybody escape from the burning Sun.

I flew to another house and saw the same thing. I came to a nearby river and saw that the electricity was very weak because the water in the river was very low. I took a gulp of the liquid and flew on.

Spotting a city, I flew with all my might because the Sun was trying to put fire on my feathers. I soared down into the city, and sat on the cement ground.

There were signs of racism everywhere. "No wonder no one is helping the Navajos with food, electricity and shelter from the heat," I said to myself. I saw that everyone was acting like kids, not like grown-ups.

I only observed a few people wandering around the streets. It finally made me realize that everyone was dying from new diseases, heat and killing. I saw the differences between the Navajos and Anglos. I felt very sorry because of what had happened to the beautiful Navajo Reservation. I saw no one was responsible enough to be equal with different races and each other. The people were not working with each other.

Suddenly I woke to the uproar of birds outside my window. "Thank goodness, it is only 1996," I whispered to myself.

—Mikaela Crank, 10, is a Navajo Indian, of the Kiyaa'aani clan and Bitah'ni clan, who lives on the Navajo reserva'ion in Dennehotso, Arizona. She writes, "A drought this summer on the Navajo Reservation inspired me to write this story. There was no rain for the livestock and the animals were dying everywhere."

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THE QUARLICK

by Cassie Armstrong

"Mommy," the kids called, "it's raining!"

"I guess we're going to have Christmas after all," their mom, Ananda replied.

"Mommy, will you tell us about when you were a kid, and you had that white stuff, that ... that... "

"Snow?"

"Yeah, snow!"

"Sure. I was born way back in 1981. We had snow every winter and..."

The year was 2025, and it was a cold winter for the people of Michigan. The temperature had already dropped into the 50's twice. Children hoped for a wet Christmas, and parents remembered white ones.

The air was smog-filled. Humans and pets breathed from their portable oxygen tanks. Some of the older ones, the ones born back in the 70's and 80's, had man-made lungs, theirs having burned out by all the pollution.

Ananda sat down to watch the news in her living room. She turned the tv on, then turned up the atmosphere. She much preferred when she was a child—they didn't have to worry about the atmosphere. It was just there. Of course, they had taken everything for granted.

Her attention was drawn to the television:

"Reporting for Channel 15 News, I'm Cathy Rein. It's the 10th anniversary of the Los Angeles quarlick (that's the word for the disappearance of a city amidst the smog. Once a city is quarlicked, it has no hope. It's lost). *Just two years before, on this very day, two million people, the population of Los Angeles, were lost in the smog. Scientists warned about this, but by the time they did, it was too late. People, we ask you to limit the use of your transiquit travelers to five times*

per hour. Use them for places five steps or more away. We need to do our best to save our quickly deteriorating planet... "

Ananda flipped the tv off. She was tired of hearing their pleas. This generation cared less about the planet than their parents. Ananda got up to turn the atmosphere up once more. She glanced down at the paper.

The headline read, "Quarlick predicted for Rockford."

"Oh no!" thought Ananda. "We need to think about finding a new home where there's no quarlick predicted, at least for a while." She tucked the thought in the back of her head as her children, Solee and Phelo, ran in. "No need to worry them," she thought.

"Mommy," Solee pleaded, "Can we go out to eat?"

"Please!" chimed in Phelo.

"Not tonight. We need to limit the use of our transiquit travelers."

"Pleeeeease Mommy!"

"I said no, and that's final." The children stomped off mumbling to themselves. "I'm home!" called Jim, Ananda's husband. The children forgot their disappointments as they ran to meet their father.

That night Jim and Ananda lay reading in bed. Ananda brought up the subject of the quarlick. "Jim, do you think what they're saying is true? Is there really going to be a quarlick?"

"I don't know, Ananda. Maybe we should look at houses in cities where they're not predicting a quarlick."

"Where the heck is that? I don't think there is such a place left. They're all gone. We're self-destructing!"

"Why don't we stay with your mother until we find a place of our own," Jim suggested.

"I guess there's no sense in selling this place. Who'd be dumb enough to buy it?"

The next day they told Solee and Phelo their plans. Then they began to pack.

"Mommy, do we have to move?" Solee asked Ananda.

"Yes, honey. We didn't want to scare you, but scientists are predicting a quarlick soon. We have to go."

"But I don't want to go!" Solee cried.

Trust me, you would rather move than get stuck in a quarlick."

That night at dinner, Jim announced that they would move the next day. Later that night Ananda told him about Solee being upset.

"She's young. She'll bounce back, make new friends. You'll see. Now get some sleep, tomorrow is a big day. Goodnight, dear."

"Goodnight, Jim."

They started for Ananda's mother's house around 10:00 a.m. The air was becoming extremely thick with smog, but they pushed on. About halfway there they hit another car in the thick smog. The crash was fatal for all the victims. They died from the impact moments before the total quarlick.

Cassie Armstrong, 14, lives in Rockford, Michigan.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

by Ranjana Das

Looking up into the night that surrounded her, Shauna came across the star that used to be hers. It wasn't especially large, and there were at least a million other stars that could outshine it any day, but she was sure it was the one. She had followed and memorized its movement to the end—as she knew everyone else had—and since then, had been able to identify its exact place in the heavens at any given time.

Strange, she thought. One would think that when they'd looked back, their eyes would have turned to their home, the world they were leaving behind. But all they could look at was the star; their beautiful yellow sun, shrinking and disappearing before them as they left its system and moved into the influence of another.

The people now looked to a white star, twice as big, radiating more light and heat than they'd ever be accustomed to. They hated it, but were forced to accept it; they had blown their chances with the one they'd loved.

Some blamed it on greed and ambition, some on carelessness. Others claimed it was sheer stupidity. Whatever the case, Shauna mused silently, we went too far. We asked for too much and gave too little. It's only natural that we pay now.

She smiled wistfully as she thought back to her days in the Old World. How happy she and her people had been then, how frivolous and carefree! They had not a care in the world, for they knew they would always be watched over by their deity. Going by the name of Technology, it could do anything and give them everything and they loved it dearly because of this. All they desired, it supplied, whether it be help, comfort, efficiency, power, anything—and some did want it all.

Especially power. Who knew that the being that could bestow them with all these wonderful gifts, coupled with the latter, would eventually destroy them?

"Nuclear War..." the radio had said and the world did a double-take. They had talked about it for years, but they never thought it would actually happen. But sure enough, it happened. So now the radio said, "Mass burials, and radioactive clean-up" and the world thought, "This has been really horrible, but at least, it's over." But the radio had said, "World-wide evacuation" and the world froze. They'd never heard that term before. "What's that?" ("We're leaving this planet.") "Where are we going?" ("The planet Clarin. In a neighboring solar system.")

The devastating reality of the situation didn't hit them, Shauna realized, until the day that they left and found themselves on this barren land that they were now supposed to call home. Planet Clarin. It would've been exactly like their old home really, had there been electricity, streets, and buildings. And trees. "Trees are not a necessity on this planet." the radio had said. But, gosh, Shauna missed them. And the sun.

This fall, Ranjana Das, 16, Asian-American, of Beavercreek, Ohio, will study biochemistry at the University of Illinois.

A NAME LIKE MINE
by Mai Nguyễn-Hữu

There is no meaning for my name in English. But in Vietnamese, *Mai* is a spring flower. It is the bright and colorful difference of spring and winter. But I am an American, and here, it has no meaning.

I know that if my name were French, I would be named after the goddess *Maiya*, the goddess of spring growth. But I am not French. I am an Asian American. I have seen my flower before, but no one in my family knows what it is called in English. It has long branches with many little flowers on it. In some ways I must be similar to other flowers on the branch. But I am also different. My name tells me so. The flowers are yellow, but my middle name means white.

My middle name is *Tuyết*, which is translated in English as snow, so both of my given names together mean white spring flower. My middle name is hard to pronounce for people who don't speak Vietnamese. But my first name is probably one of the easiest words to pronounce. *Mai* is pronounced like the word "my" yet so many people have a problem with it. Perhaps because they cannot believe a foreign name can be so simple. On the first few days of school, or when playing a sport, I am constantly telling teachers and coaches, "No my name is *Mai*, not Maya, May or Mi!"

My full name is *Nguyễn-Hữu Tuyết Mai*. In Vietnam, a person always puts their last name first and their first name last. My middle name was my mother's middle name. Then she changed her middle name to her maiden name and took on my father's surname. My father's surname was *Nguyễn*, but when he came to California, he added his middle name, *Hữu*, to the end. That is how my name became *Nguyễn-Hữu Tuyết Mai*.

When I was little, my father told me a story about our last name:

Nguyễn was the name of a royal family in the south of Vietnam in the 17th century. At that time, there was a civil war in Vietnam, mainly between the *Nguyễn* family in the south, and the *Trinh* family in the North. Finally in 1802, the *Nguyễn* family overcame the *Trinh* and other families. The head of the *Nguyễn* family was *Nguyễn Anh*, and he became the Emperor of Vietnam. At the end of the 19th century, Vietnam was invaded by the French who split Vietnam into two parts. The South became a colony of France, and the North became a protectorate, with the *Nguyễn* family as a nominal head of government. The reign of the *Nguyễn* family ended in 1945 when the last emperor, *Nguyễn Bao Dai*, resigned.

My father also told me that sometimes, if someone had done something to benefit the country, the Emperor would allow him to take the royal family name.

At school, people try to prounounce my name, then ask if it is right.

"*Nu-gu-ye-en-ho.* Is that right?" one kid asks, making the strangest shape with his mouth, as if he were making fun of my name.

"No," is my response.

"Wait, say it again for me," he continues.

"*Nguyễn-Hữu*," I repeat again slowly.

"What? *Win-hu*?" he tries to no avail.

"Close," I say.

It is frustrating going through that conversation practically every day with people who want to pronounce my last name. I admire the people who try to pronounce it, but I know it is impossible because they do not have the correct accent. Well, maybe they can, if they try really hard. Even I cannot pronounce my own name, because I was born and raised in California, with a Californian accent. But no matter what I say, people still keep on trying, as if it will be a great accomplishment for the whole world if it is pronounced correctly.

At home, they called me *Bé*. It means little. I am the little one. Many families have that nickname for the littlest one in the family.

So much is based on a name! My name is *Mai*. It is a spring flower. But I do not feel like a flower. Somehow your name is supposed to describe how you are, but how do people know how you are when you are just a baby? I would like to have several names that describe me the way that I really am. One name is not enough because there is so much inside of me that one word cannot describe it all. Names like *Cuòng*, meaning strong; or *Cuông*, meaning raving mad; or *Cuống* meaning losing one's head—all of these are a part of me.

Mai Nguyễn-Hũu, Asian-American, 14, lives in San Diego, California.

MOTHERTONGUE

A progressive family
journal of personal essays,
alternative press reprints
and more
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Remember
Your
MotherTongue!!

Since 1973 Chris Mercogliano has been a teacher at the Free School and is now a co-director. He is also a writer, an editor, both of ΣΚΟΛΕ *and the* Journal of Family Life, *an environmental activist, a fanatical baseball player, and an organic gardener. He and his wife have two kids (see pieces by Sarah on pages 70, 74 and 79, and the newspaper article about, among other kids, his daughter Lily starting on page 86). He has just finished a book about the school called* Making It Up As We Go Along, *many of whose chapters came out first in* ΣΚΟΛΕ. *We'll let you know when it comes out. See also his four reviews on pages 113-120.*

STAND *WITH* CHILDREN!

by Chris Mercogliano

If only they'd called it "Stand *With* Children" (not "Stand for Children"—what a difference a preposition can make). Or how about the "Million Kid March."

For weeks afterward I winced as columnists from both left and right critiqued the politics of this historic event in which I was so fortunate to have participated. Often I found myself agreeing with them at least in part; and already I've hinted at a certain criticism of my own. And yet, while its correctness may always be held in question, there was a dimension of the Stand for Children rally which needs never be forgotten: it was a genuine children's happening, one which I am certain every child who was there will always remember.

This was no garden-variety political protest, despite of all its conventional trappings. In other words, it wasn't the speeches or the slogans on signs and tee-shirts which impressed me when we emerged from a gridlocked downtown Washington Metro station and crowded our way toward the Washington Monument on that brilliant late-spring morning. Rather it was the phenomenal sight of hundreds of thousands of children of every age, color, class and creed gathered around and beyond the reflecting pools, there to witness to the need for the leaders of this nation to step up their commitment to them.

My personal adventure had begun in Albany at about 11pm the night before when, under the glare of network television lights, with the Bishop of the Albany diocese and other local dignitaries there to wish us safe journey, I boarded a charter bus with four dozen or so kids of all ages and a handful of adult chaperones. We represented several grass roots inner-city institutions: Union Baptist Church, whose young people's choir was scheduled to perform the next morning, Capital District Field of Dreams, an integrated youth baseball league, and the Free School. Altogether eleven buses from the Albany area headed out for the Nation's Capital that night.

Evidence of the enormity of the rally became apparent when we made our first pit stop on the New Jersey Turnpike in the wee hours of the morning. The parking lot was choked with buses and there were blear-eyed rally-goers everywhere. As the crowd grew larger at each succeeding stop, the question in the minds of unknowing observers must certainly have been, "Where in the world are all those children going?" Roadside service workers were hard pressed to keep up with our needs; but we remained patient and upbeat. It was a kind of friendly takeover.

In Washington, rally organizers had arranged for the buses to stage in satellite parking lots at outlying Metro stops. Only in Tokyo have I seen such teeming crowds in a subway. There were moments when it became a bit frightening; but the gods were with us and our subgroup of twelve managed to stay together throughout the day. On the Metro we began meeting people who had come from as far away as Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit and even Alabama. Everyone's excitement was tangible as we headed downtown to the Mall, that famous strip of land which connects the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial.

Indeed it was a scene reminiscent of the sixties, with one significant difference: this time a full two-thirds of the protesters were children. Much can be said—and already has been said—about the motives of the organizers of this monumental event. Critics on the right immediately accused Children's Defense Fund head Marian Wright Edelman, Stand for Children's originator, of wanting to expand the welfare state still further by using the plight of children to tug on the nation's heart—and purse—strings. Critics on the left have since charged her with ignoring the underlying issue of children's constitutional rights, thereby attempting to treat only the symptoms and not the cause of the disease, which according to one commentator is the reality that in the United States we treat kids as third-class citizens at best. In her rally-ending speech, Edelman elected to become the moral conscience of our country, shaming us for placing the needs of children so much farther down the list of national priorities than the rest of the world's developed nations.

Meanwhile, the children were there for themselves; and I was there to stand *with* them. All too often in a society which values obedience and conformity so highly, we discount the extent to which children can speak for themselves and effectively represent their own interests. This thought leads straight to my criticism of the rally, which is that children themselves should have occupied a more prominent position in organizing and conducting the day's events. More children's voices should have been heard on that historic day, and not just those of children singing. Wouldn't the message have been all the more compelling had Marian Wright Edelman been standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial *with* a group of young spokespeople, rather than alone to express express her moral and political agenda on their behalf.

Miles

All of this isn't to say that children don't need adults to defend and protect them, which clearly is the mission of Mrs. Edelman and the Children's Defense Fund, regardless of whether or not one agrees with their analysis of the problem. And I'm not out to invalidate the value of the Stand for Children rally simply because children didn't play a more prominent role. All things considered, it was an extraordinary event—the first of its kind—and it had a wide-ranging impact on many different levels, from the collective to the individual. Just consider its effect on the life of one twelve year-old in my group who, when we finally got close enough to the speakers' platform to see what was going on, gasped out loud, "Isn't that where Martin Luther King, Jr. stood when he gave the 'I Have a Dream' speech?" That alone was worth traveling through the night to Washington for.

Perhaps it should become an annual event, when the nation's children descend upon the Nation's Capital *en masse* in order to remind us of their presence, value and power as a group. Perhaps they should arrive on a weekday so that they could also drop in on the Congress, the President and maybe even the Supreme Court and thereby make their needs known face to face. Perhaps during each visit they should also issue a yearly report card in which they assess the nation's policy performance from their vantage point as children in America. Wouldn't that be interesting?

In any case, I, for one, would be more than glad to go on accompanying groups of kids from Albany as I did this year. It felt good, and right, to be standing there on that hallowed ground, amidst all of the monuments to our nation's founders, standing *with* those children while they stood there for themselves and for the children yet to come. And I doubt I would be the only one.

From Upland Hills School:

Nov. 23, 1995.

Dear Mary;

Here's some writing by my students.

Last term, we did a unit on Nature Writers—Emerson, Thoreau, Burroughs, Audubon, Muir etc. Part of that unit involved sitting in the woods with our journals and writing. These pieces are the result of that activity.

About two weeks into the term, each student chose a Nature Writer to research. They found biographies, read books and essays written by "their writer," and in the end, all came to school dressed as that writer. They stood in front of our group and some invited guests and presented their writers in three characterizations. It was like a convention. They all wore name tags and beards and period clothes. It was great fun and an engaging way to bring these people and this usually dry genre to life.

I had become interested in this uniquely American genre last summer. In my search for books written with young people (12-15) in mind, I found none. Reading most of these writers was a real stretch for my kids. Fortunately, our school sits in the middle of 300 acres of wooded rolling hills and we have the opportunity to be with Nature. It's important that our children establish a relationship with the Natural world that they might come to care deeply for it.

I think these "Meditations from the Woods" might be of significant value to kids who are unable to be with Nature. I wonder if you folks might be interested in publishing these writings with illustrations in a book form. We're writing continually, so over a period of several months, you could have a large number of these "Meditations" to choose from. Let me know.

Thanks for your kind consideration,

Ted (Strunck)

"My Spot"
by Brett

As I sit down in my spot a tree frog jumps. Once, twice, three times as he stops to take a rest by a mushroom cap. A mosquito buzzes by. Something tickles my leg. I look down to see a spider perched on a piece of grass. I pick up the grass as the spider falls off and dangles foolishly on a piece of thread. If I were a spider and somebody picked me up I'd be scared stiff.

As I look closer at the ground I see lots of mushrooms. Some skinny with flat round heads and some skinny with narrow small heads.

You can hardly see the soil because it's so caked with moss and small plants.

Behind me is a giant spider web. The middle of it is made up of diamond shaped holes. I see its builder in one of the corners but all he's caught so far is leaves.

I kick a dead branch on the ground. The dead wood shatters. Bugs run from side to side from out of the cracks. So I guess even the dead provide shelter for the living. It's kind of like composting or recycling but it's natures way of doing it.

by Anonymous

The pond's water is full of life—lots of tiny animals and insects. There's cattails growing in the water. The water itself is alive. It ripples now and then but mostly it's still.

Expectations in the Woods
by Amy Kaleniecki

I'm surrounded by tall, beautiful, various trees blowing gracefully with the wind. The wind to me is one of the most incredible things in the world. It does so many things. The sound is so exquisite.

It is a whole other world out here. Unlike the world I live in it is so peaceful. It is as if as long as I am out here every one of my expectations are filled. I feel as though I am part of nature and in fact too are gracefully blowing with the wind. I could just sit here and observe and listen forever.

I hear Ted blowing the harmonica. I have to go back to the prevalent world.

Nature Writing Piece
by Mary

The soil is wet. I hear many birds singing the praises of this glorious morning. I feel welcomed today in the forest. Maybe because I make the forest feel welcome in me. I look up at the whitish-green leaf that stems out of the bush. It's almost transparent. Everything seems so magical. I'm almost afraid to touch it all, for if I do, the spell might be broken. A delicious smell invades my nose. It comes, then goes again and again, like little wafts of memories. That smell! That smell! I can't get over it. I can almost taste it. I've experienced it so many times before. I touch my nose, then my forehead to a tree branch, gently swaying, erasing all the worries that lie within me. I take a deep breath. The flavorful air stirs inside me, then carries out all of the old rotting air out of me as I exhale.

A single leaf falls upon this paper. I let it lie there, basking in the joy that I so freely give off. But soon I must turn the page. I give a slight blow of my breath and it falls to the soil in its natural course. Suddenly I know that I don't have to stay still any longer. I can move with nature. I start to sway, letting the skin on my fingertips brush up against the calming air. I turn and look way above. The sun seeps its warming touch through bunches of green leaves at the very tip top of the forest's boundaries. Beyond that it is only sky. Everywhere around the forest are a blend of beautiful colors as Autumn's crisp breath tickles the leaves until they change color. I also get tickled by Autumn's crisp, cool breath until my cheeks turn rosy.

Leaves

by Traci Elder

Some big, some small,
Some fat, some thin,
They fall to the ground with a gust of wind.
The wind picks them up and takes them along
and puts them down where they belong.

WRITING IN THE WOODS

by Austin Stanley

Trees are everywhere. Leaves scattered on the ground. One tree stands while another lays. The leaves wave back and forth. A bird calls. It's talking to another bird. Screeching and singing to it. A deep hiss blows though the trees now and then.

The tree standing there has perfectly matched stripes, spread evenly throughout the tree. It stands motionless, then waves and says hello. In the tree, every few feet a branch stands out. Every inch a few leaves stick out. The branches get smaller and some get bigger.

Each blade of grass follows each other. The wind leads them. They all are the same way. The tree and grass are like each other in many ways. They share the same ground, they both are plants, they both need the pond, they are family. There is no one piece of dirt, they are all connected.

The tree shares the same pattern as the leaves—the little veins, like the branch, both try to stand out as far as possible.

A small bug falls on my book. It is yellow. I can tell it's lost. It crawls around trying to find its home.

by Adrianne

In the woods..... Just sitting here freezing. Little white bug resting on my paper. He is swarmed by a sea of lines soon to be engulfed with a mass of thoughts and sights. Now the little white bug gets scared and scurries off the sea of white down to the forest floor. He will be safe now for at least a while.

NATURE WRITING

by May

I feel so wonderful, nature and me, the crickets and the birds. The stone I am sitting on is covered with dry moss. Mosquitoes swarm around my head.

I don't see very many patterns out here because nothing is the same. There are smooth trees and rugged hard trees with peeling bark. There are new plants sprouting out of the ground. I look up and see all different kinds of leaves.

I look down, I see leaves and dirt, moss and fungi, acorns and pine cones, rocks and logs, weeds and of course, the pond. Bright green from algae, unlike in the winter, solid white ice a foot thick.

The branches sway as a gentle breeze blows. Leaves fall to the ground. There is a huge ditch. I wonder what caused it, has it been there forever, or did it gradually happen?

I don't see very many creatures, but I can tell that they were here. Ant hills, half chewed acorns, scratch marks on trees and holes in dead wood.

FOREST

by Kris

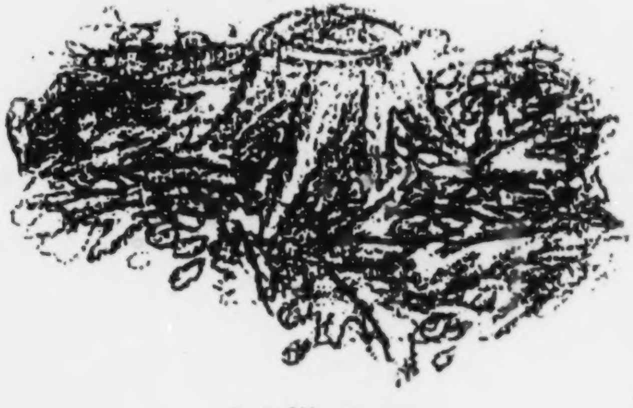
Light combs through the soft branches. The small plants thrive from the murky green waters of the swamp. Ants march merrily on through a battlefield of fallen needles, carrying resources for the community. Clouds soar overhead, reminders of days to come. The never-ending drone of the cricket carries through the dense undergrowth to tickle my ears with their light chirpings. A small bird calls out for its kin. Bees fly silently from flower to flower. The snaps of dead wood alert me to the presence of others who are perhaps as immersed in their surroundings. Bare branches tell tales of glory once won, now forever forgotten. Sunlight illuminates branches around me, blinding in it's brilliance. A strange birds calls sound of pain and sorrow, death and anger. The lush green colors of life are denied me, even as I stand in its great triumph I am overlooked, lost, forgotten.

by Jesse Tarr

The air is cool this early autumn morning. The sun's light, after traveling through 93,000,000 miles of open, barren space is hitting my face at an angle that seems to light up my whole inside. I hear an occasional bird call, reminding me that we're not the only ones. This reminder is a good reminder, for without this reminder we could lose our connectedness with Mother Earth, and without our connectedness with Mother Earth, we could quite easily lose her.

A Bug
by Anjuli

As I sit here, I see a bug crawling slowly through the leaves. It minds its own business, not trying to hurt anything, but not being particularly worried if it does. It wanders onto a low stump where it spends a few minutes of its life soaring up the warm sunlight. Then it crawls back down into the leaves probably never to be seen by a human again.



Anjuli's stump

Nature

by Dustin

I lay down in the beginning of my squirrel fort. The sun's light flows in through the gaps of wood. Ants walk up and down an almost invisible hill. Some bramble I have already found sits among the dry leaves. Little tufts of green grass poke their heads out from under a fallen tree. A small red fly, the size of a grain of sand lands on my page. Then darts off after a moth. The moth is white and was sitting on the skeleton of my fort. After seeing the red bug it zooms off as fast as its wings will go. A spider web dangles from my main post and a small spider runs along it. In the background I hear two birds yelling at each other. One goes CAW-CAW and the other TWEE-TEA.

I look into the forest. A million flashes of light glitter on and off of countless threads of webbing. Crackling of wood and a dog's bark startle me. Someone must be getting wood for their hut. The dog is probably barking at a stranger or some terrified little creature. I wish the dog would stop making its howls and stop bothering me. It is part of its life and I guess I couldn't stop it from where I am sitting in the frame of my fort.

by Emily Butcher

Darkness is before me
frightening with thunder of joy
that soon the sun spots will shine
once more upon me.
Branches reaching almost like
they're out to grab me,
I run.
Silence

except for one more gasp of
breath, suddenly I'm caught
with the sun and darkness
pulling back.
The wind passes through willing
me to break free,
I run once more not knowing
where to go.
Stopping after finally knowing
that hope will climb my
way to help,
Trapped with anger I have nothing
left but my soul
melting away from all of my tear's own
sadness.
I tried to find the light to
the real me again,
Spinning for no reason
I see someone in the distant
sky flying away.
"Stop" I said not knowing
that soon it will be back
tomorrow.

by Katrina

A dark abyss hurls itself over the forest. A new feeling covers the Earth. Leaves are wet, and a slight step sends a squishing sound. Leaves rustle but no longer do they sing and dance. They whisper and cry. They tell of a mystery of a time long passed.

Some may think this feeling is dark, gloomy and lonely but to me the feeling is just as awesome as the sunlight.

My clay pot once hard and baked by the sun is a gooey paste. I feel it. It sends a soothing feeling.

The wind blows harshly again. His heavy arms grab me and fill my soul. He twines my hair and strokes my bare neck. He pierces my skin, bringing shivers to my mood. Like me the wind travels. He stops to look and understand and then blows on. His spirit keeps moving along until he must rest. He goes to blow again but something grabs him. This unknown thing will not let the wind go. He must remain haunting the once peaceful valley. He screams and cries for freedom. But something or someone has captured his massive body. He lays and wails like a cloud overhead.

I brake away from my thoughts of the wind and move on.

Leaves fall to what some call the end but is it? I stand filled with confusion.

I start to feel like a real nature writer but the name nature writer does not describe it. Perhaps a new name will come to mind.

The pond is gray with mystery and envy. The trees rock back and forth with the wind. They touch each other and then separate possibly never to touch again.

Gusts of wind start pouring in. He bends limbs and branches. Pushing anything in his way.

My body starts thinking about warmth. I can imagine a steaming cup of hot chocolate. The mug warms my rigid hands and the hot liquid burns my mouth yet I keep drinking. I am warm now and can turn my mind back to the Earth.

Hopefully soon a rain drop will push its way out of the clouds and bring a cleansing shower to the Earth. This dark world welcomes me inward. I step inside and become part of it.

Sent by Ted Strunck, from Upland Hills School, 2575 Indian Lake Rd., Oxford, MI 48370, (810) 693-2878. Thanks kids. Thanks, Ted. Sorry it took so long to get them printed! Yes, please send us more!

HOW LOVE BECOMES
by Hana Brenner-Katz

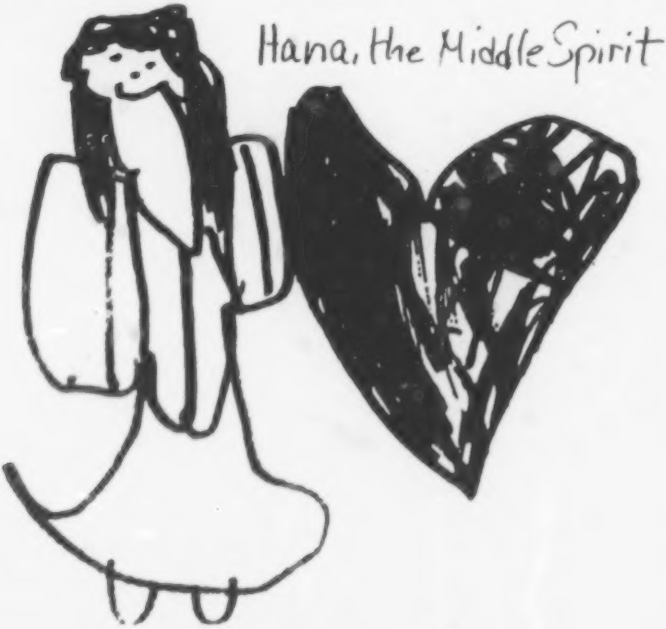
Once upon a time, a long time ago, love came from a little spirit to a big spirit. When the little spirit met the big spirit, they got married. They had a child that was the middle spirit .

I made up a poem about it, and here it is:

Little spirits to big spirits
Have little babies.
From the time they are little
To the time they are 90 years old,
They have been loved.

The end.

That was my poem that I wrote. And that whole poem was true. From little spirits to big spirits. Middle spirits to huge spirits. All came true.



Hana, the Middle Spirit

From Clonlara School:

FRONT PORTABLE NEWS

from Clonlara's FP Newsletter

The quail eggs arrived and are being faithfully incubated and watched over. We love to take care of the many animals that are in our classroom. It is one way that we try to stay in touch with life's many diverse creatures. We are looking for homes for the animals for the duration of the winter break. Any offers?

Last week we had a holiday party and really liked staying at the White Lodge all day. It seems to be a place where maybe we could stay overnight sometime. Thank you to everyone who brought food and fun times to the day at White Lodge.

We also went to the Kelsey museum and learned about life in Nubia 5,000 years ago. We even saw a 5,000 year old arrow head imbedded in a vertebra. We learned how to write our names in hieroglyphics. Look below for some examples of our names. We also recommend the museum highly.

Here are some examples of some silly poems from some front portable students:

by Krista and Erika

I read a book all day long
The book I read is very long
the book I have is from Japan
because I am eating strawberry jam.

MUNK
by Kailey and Marly

There was a skunk, his name was MUNK
He lived in a pile of junk and

that's why he stunk
Some people came up to him and said
"Hey, punk- you should be sunk"
MUNK said "you are the punk,
you should be sunk"
and he went back to his junk.

by Nick and Daniel

GAMES games, games,
games they rot your brains
They're all you do when it rains
but if you're an addict you're in trouble
cause your prices....double

For the Newsletter from Maki:

SNOW SNOW SNOW SNOW SNOW!!
COLD COLD COLD COLD COLD!!

I've never seen such a lot of snow like this. I've never experienced such cold weather like this!! It's really cold but I enjoy snow so much. I've never sled before, but I did on Tuesday with Erika and Rowan. It was fun!!

I don't know how long I can stand this weather in Ann Arbor because I came from Kobe City [*Japan, where there was a very serious earthquake not long ago*] where we have snow only a few times a year and usually snow won't stay on the ground. So, I enjoy making footprints on my way home from Clonlara. If you see me walking slowly, it's not to avoid slipping but because I'm making footprints while singing songs. Please say "hi" to me!!!

Maki's footprints

Clonlara is an alternative school of many, many years' standing in Ann Arbor, MI. They are pioneers in establishing excellent working and exchange connections with a number of Japanese alternative schools, and particularly with Tokyo Shure, with whom there have been trans-oceanic visits both ways!

You can write to these students at Clonlara, 1289 Jewett St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104, or you may contact Terry Wheeler at Clonlara by e-mail address: clonlara@delphi.com.

They also have an excellent and long-standing homeschooling network that gives aid and comfort to homeschooling families which you may contact by writing Clonlara's founder/director Dr. Pat Montgomery at HBEP (Home-based Education Program) at the same address.

They also maintain a high school internet program run by Stan Kanner which offers high school courses on line. It's called Compuhigh, and you may contact him either through HBEP or by writing him via E-mail at stankan@netvision.net.il.

And here's a response I received to an e-mail request for contributions by e-mail from a homeschooling friend, Linda Dobson, who lives in the Adirondack mountains:

My daughter, Erika, happens to be a poet and was tickled pink at your request! I understand deadlines, but I had to work all day today and only now find the time to collect my thoughts and take care of the *important* stuff! I'll copy the poem here; if it would help to do it another way, please let me know what that way is. I'm still learnin', too!

Love,
Linda

E-mail is as good as it gets, Linda! Thanks, and thank Erika for me. Twice a year, spring and fall, we're open for kids' stuff! Begging for it! Delighted with it!

STANDING IN THE RAIN

by Erika Dobson

It's been an hour, I'm still standing in the rain.
You walk by, only mumble hi, and I feel a surge of pain.
Don't you ever notice how I wait for you out here?
Or how I always stand so close just to have you near?
Someday I'll get the courage, and somehow talk to you.
I'll start a conversation, we'll exchange a word or two.
But until I get the courage, I'll have to take the pain.
I'll be out here by myself, standing in the rain.

Erika Dobson, homeschooler, age 15

Oh, Erika, that brings me back to my fifteenth year! I can still feel the pain! And I'm seventy-six going on seventy-seven. Wow.

And here's another e-mail response from John Potter, headmaster of the New School for Northern Virginia, who sends me a poem written by his son Sacha:

IN A FLOWER SEED

by Sacha Potter

A Brown wall separating You
from the wet soil, steam
and fog surrounding you
and the darkness all around You.
Worms and snails crawling by
making sad noises.

Sacha Potter, 7 years old, is a student at the New School of Northern Virginia. Thanks, Sacha, to you and your father for letting me use your poem!

And here's a great story contributed by one of my granddaughters, Madeline Leue, who has sent us poems for previous issues. We're glad she's graduated to long stories, and this is one is a doozy! Keep 'em coming, Maddy!

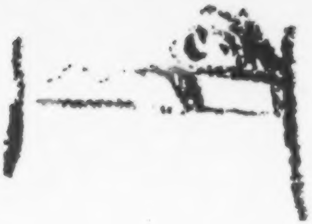
THE DARK OF DARKNESS

by Maddy Leue

DEDICATION

to Lah

Chapter 1



Once there was a boy He was asleep. All of a sudden he woke up. A little voice said, "What's your name?" The boy was breathless. The voice said it again.

The boy said "W - w - who are y - y - you?"

"I'm, I'm, I'm, I don't know. And who are you?" said the voice.

"I'm Ian," said the boy."

"So, Ian," said the voice.

"Yes," said Ian.

"I don't know what my name is. It was stolen, " said the voice. "And I need you to get it for me. Will you?"

"I guess so," said Ian.

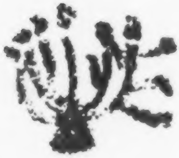
"So I will wake you up at 1 in the morning. Now go back to sleep."

"O - O -OK - K," said Ian.

At 1 o'clock he woke up to find breakfast made. He ate all he could stuff in himself. Then he saw a big, so big, I mean like as big as a man, spider. He was not scared, though. He knew it was the voice. He said, "Now, why don't you pack lots of food and lots of drink and lots of clothing."

"OK," said the boy. So he did. After he did, he went back to where the spider was waiting for him.

Chapter 2



"Off we go," said the spider.

"OK," said the boy. So they started walking. Soon they saw a small clearing.

The spider said, "We will camp out here." When the boy woke up, it was two days later.

Stretching and yawning the boy asked, "How long have I been sleeping?"

"Two days," said the spider. The boy looked around. Suddenly his eyes flashed to a bush full of blueberries. He pounced on them. He gave the remaining three to the spider.

Chapter 3

"We must be going," said the spider.

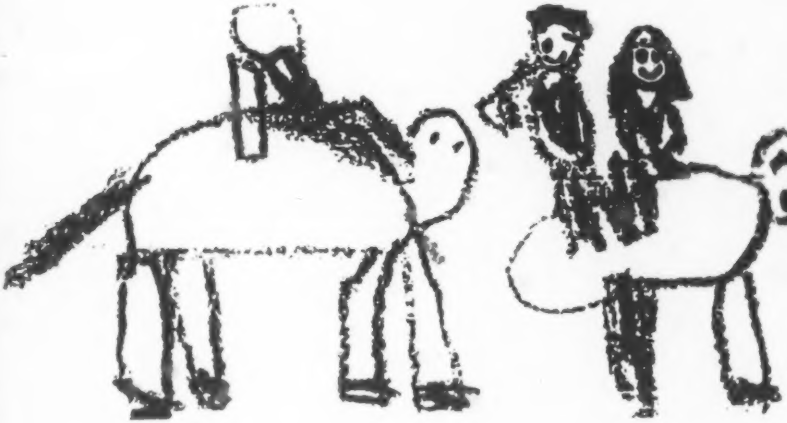
"OK," said the boy. So they went. Suddenly the spider went ice cold still.

"Shhhh!" said the spider. Then the boy heard it too. The klop, klop, klop, gallop of a horse, far off in the distance. And the, "Hey, Tom, hi ya, Jim, I saw a boy in the bush over there". Then the boy saw him too. Two men on white horses and lots of food on their backs. Sitting on one's lap was a girl, no more than 5 years old.

The man with the girl said to the girl, "Maddy, want something to eat and to drink?"

"Yes!!!" said the girl. The boy could not stay still, so he went out of the bush. The men ran away.

"Go back home," they yelled. The boy stayed put.



Chapter 4

The boy, who was usually afraid to death, had so much courage that he ran after them. Finally he grabbed the horse's tail. The horse stopped in its trail. The boy said, "I come in peace, I leave in peace." That cooled the man down. The girl got off the horse to greet the boy.

"Hi, my name is Maddy," said the girl.

"H-H - i - i - i," said the boy.

The spider, who had caught up, said, "It's time to go, but we can go with Maddy and the men if they would like to go to the Dark of Darkness."

There was a silence until one of the men said, "My name is Tom and Tom is never afraid, they say, so I will go. My friend Jim is often called my twin. So I think he'll come too. Right, Jim?"

"Yes," said Jim.

"What's the Dark of Darkness?" asked the boy.

"The Dark of Darkness is the place where all personalities that are stolen are put. There is a - a - a thing, not human, not anything, thinks he can get all things' personalities. But we will not let him. I will sing," said the spider, and then he sang,

"100 for the Earth,
20 for the moon,
15 for Saturn
and 20 for Jupiter.
Personalities are getting short
but you can't let him take yours too.

69 for Mars,
15 for Uranus,
12 for Uropa,
7 for Ganymede.
Personalities are growing short
but you don't let him take yours too.

12 for Callisto,
50 for Thysdione and Rana.
There are more
but I don't know how many they have.

So remember the song,
Please, please, please claim my one.
Please do."

"I made that up myself," said the spider. "And it has been granted," said the spider with a twinkle in his eye.

"I normally say that in my language. I will sing it to you."

"Le ta so may
te lo pa pay le po
ta ly son le ty not la co.
Sas aloto can la fo plo as ma lets.

To la sa ma le
cono plet as to la ta no te
lala magada
foolate sapa
lanase to to fe la

he magoo lave sait.
Sas aloto can la fo plo as ma lets.

Noma to ra sa poola toola.
Pta ya sla ptay assla ptay
as slat te la fa ano ptay acly.
I he ve a nace lageg in sasa le ya too.

It goes:

Te fe now lewyes pa le ta
sas to tof sa la fa fa.
Mas so so ma te te codery
ma aca pa soom coeo so te med.
Masey te te la too my foo loto montef.
Ma soso fe te codeny ma
acand pas soom co dep so te meaf."

"A lot prettier," said the boy.

"Come!" said the spider. "We must sleep with Tom and Jim and Maddy. I've got blankets."

"I have 3," said Tom.

"Well, I have 2," said the boy. "Well, we will all have 1."

"I'll keep watch until midnight," said the spider. "And then I'll wake Ian."

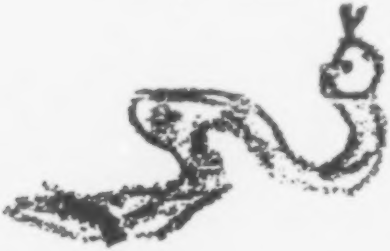
"Oh no, not me," said Ian.

"Yes," said the spider.

They went to sleep. At midnight, just like he said, the spider woke up the boy. The boy took his place at the top of the mountain. Suddenly he saw two big eyes, as bright as stars. He saw a slimy green body with two paddle-like feet and arms with no slime. Instead there was a little remains of shirt. He woke up the spider. He told the spider. The spider yelled, "Tom, Jim, Maddy. I know Maddy is too young, but she can collect rocks. We will throw them at the thing." So they did.

The thing threw them back. He sang, "My name is Clamf." Finally he went away. They went to talk. They agreed to remember Clamf. So they did.

Chapter 5



"Aaaaa," the boy yelled. A day had passed. They were in a small pile of rocks. The spider rolled them into a small pile with a cave inside. The boy saw a rattlesnake heading for him. The others woke. The boy, Tom, Jim, and the spider stayed stalk still and no words came out of any mouth. Then suddenly the spider said, "De to ly ne soty co so go go go," and paused and sang again, "Te le se fe he ne," and then paused again. Then, "Snake, snake, I know your master, go, go, go," and in fright the snake went.

Chapter 6

"Time to go," said the spider. I used to be in the P.G.S. Want me to sing my anthem?"

"Sure," said the boy.

The spider said in a small but clear voice to the boy,`

"100 for the Earth,
20 for the moon,
15 for Saturn,
and 20 for Jupiter.
Personalities are getting short
and you can't let him take yours too.

69 for Mars,
15 for Uranus,
12 for Uropa,
7 for Ganymede.

Personalities are growing short
but you don't let him take yours too.

12 for Callisto,
50 for Thysdione
and Rana.
There are more

but I don't know how many they have.

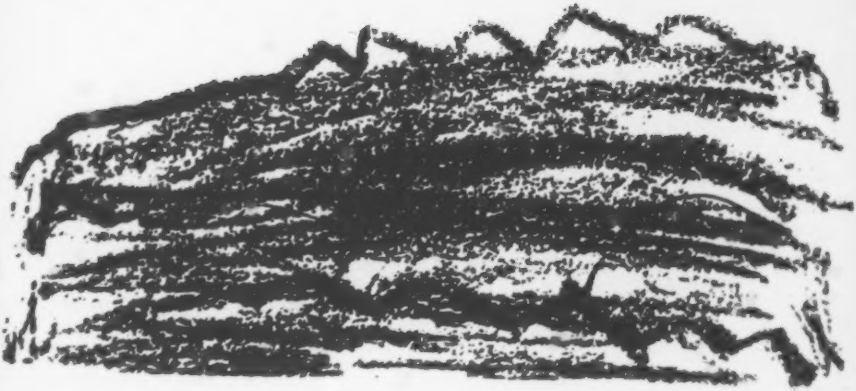
So remember the song,
Please, please, please claim my one.
Please do."

The spider said, "I was the leader."
"Wow, woo, cool!" they said all at once.

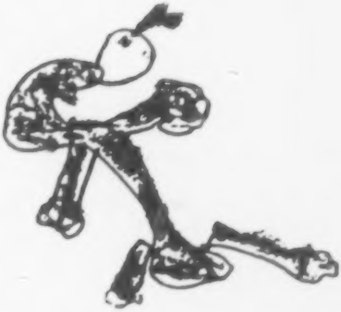
Suddenly the spider said, "I smell danger. Quick!" They ran.

Chapter 7

Soon they came through to a small clearing, or so they thought.
"We must eat, drink, and rest. We've - a-a-a-a-ah - Sna - the sna -, I bet they're the Snakeins! Bad news. Ta se ta se la to lo," the spider said.
Suddenly they noticed 2 people gone: the boy and Maddy. The spider said, "To fo to yo le te me."
Up they went, but they fell in the middle of an ocean. A big ocean, deep, deep, in water.
"N-n-n-n-n-o-o-o-o," Tom and Jim yelled.



Chapter 8



"Stop in your tracks, boy. What's your name?" the Snakein said.

He thought he had to fake, so he said, "Pete."

"Now let me go," said the boy.

The Snakein said roughly "Say Master Snakein. My name is - I'm not telling you my name." The Snakein laughed. "Ha ha ha ha."

"Who are you?" said the boy. They looked somewhat like snakes with feet and arms. They were all slimy. "Snnn--aaakeins" said the Snakeins. "Oh, great Clamf," the Snakeins said in gruff but mocking voices.

The boy almost fainted. Clamf, the name he had remembered.

The green slimy thing came. The boy pinched himself. It was real.

Chapter 9

"Let's fry him. No, no, we're gonna keep him with us in the name of Coloteni, So te sef the Great."

The boy wanted to run away. So he went, or tried to. But he was caught. Next the Snakeins started fighting over how or what to do with him. He ran so fast out of the cave. He ran 15 miles before he stopped. He saw shoeprints so small, they looked like Maddy's. Next to them in sloppy letters were,

"Mom, dad, Maddy, a b c d e f g h i j k 1 m n o p q r s t u v w Maddy x y z 555 a b 5 5 5 Ian Tom, Jim, Sarah Spider."

"Maddy, where is she?" said the boy. Next to the mud there was a stick. Next to the stuff someone had written a speech. It said,

Ian, we (Tom, Jim, and spider) are waiting. We found some stuff that looked like ripped shoes. They were Maddy's shoes. We found, a little while after, small footprints. There was a bush of raspberries. In the ground next to them was Maddy's name in the mud. If you found the clue you will see a blueberry and raspberry track and it has all sorts of stuff. Follow it. We'll be waiting. We got food from a house nearby. It's blue with a pink door and green window panes. She'll be happy to feed you. Hope you get back with us.

Tom, Jim and the spider.
P.S. Come as soon as possible.

The boy read the letter. He walked on and found a ripped shoe, a half eaten raspberry, and the word "Maddy" on a path. He had found it. The boy ran up the path. Soon the night fell over the sun. He rested in a patch of grass. Soon, very soon, he'd be with his companions. Soon. He lay down and went to sleep, and even in his dreams, he heard the word "Soon" over and over. He felt as safe as he could be.

Chapter 10

When he woke up he ran and he ran. Soon he heard the voices of his friends. He yelled at the top of his lungs "I'm here!!!!!" He heard answering voices getting nearer and nearer.

"Yes, Ian!!!"

"Yo co se he yo!!!"

He could tell this was the voice of the spider. They ran towards each other and ate and ate and ate. And then they rejoiced from all the stuff. But they didn't see Maddy walk out of the clearing.

"Maddy!!!!" they said in unison.

Maddy said, "I want to know what happened to all of you".

"OK," said Tom. "When you left we saw that you were gone. So we searched and searched but did not find you. Soon we saw the alphabet with Maddy written in between. We walked on. We found more stuff later."

"But I wrote a letter in the mud."

Ian said, "I found it. We made a path of food and stuff for—I found it. For me to follow, and I did. And found you too. Well, I got taken by a mythical story, Snakeins," said the boy.

"Just like I thought," said the spider.

"When they started fighting I ran away."

"Now tell us your story," said Ian.

"Well, I went to save Ian and got captured by Ratins. I almost starved, got frostbitten, and got bitten by a stray dog. But, I'm all right. I owe my life to Ne co le co who found me every time, freed me from Ratins and healed me with co le co le to ne yo ye, the Artencooly's cure from the country of Artencooy.

The spider gasped. "Ne co le co!" he squeaked out. "He claimed he saved 1,000,000,000 in his life! Do you know Artencooly?" said the spider.

"Ya, I will teach you. Yo ne fe so lo lo ye nake yer fecole. That's how you say, 'Maddy come, Tom come, Jim come.'"

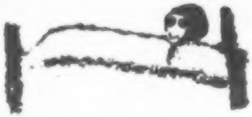
He said the words over and over. He taught them to Tom and Jim. And every day for one hour Maddy gave him lessons.

One day they saw a teenager girl. She came and asked what they were doing.

They said, "That shall be unknown."

The girl walked away. The spider started running.

He said, "Come on, we're almost there. My name, it's Ya ye lo. I know my last name is Ke ne lo sef pel. My personality is back."



The boy woke up.
The spider said "Thank you."
Then he vanished.

THE END

And here's Maddy's latest poem:

MY EYES ARE CLOSED
by Maddy Leue

My eyes are closed
and on my knees.
My knees are closed
and on my feet.
My feet are closed
and on my chair.
The chair is just
just standing there.
Why's the chair
just standing there?
Because it can't go
anywhere.

My eyes aren't closed
and on my knees.
My knees aren't closed
and on my feet.
My feet aren't closed
and on the chair.
The chair is just
just standing there.
because it can't go anywhere.

Madeline Leue, age seven, is currently a student at Sanderson Academy in Ashfield, MA., a village public school.

The story that follows was written by her brother Ian (see below), who is starting his first school year at a private school called Charlemont Academy near their home. Both Maddy and Ian were homeschooled for a couple of years (two years ago) and later made the choice to branch out.

Ian has contributed several stories and articles to ΣΚΟΛΕ. We hope he'll go on with this one. I'm still waiting to hear what happened to Flank, from his earlier story, "The Time Machine."

THE STORY OF MY DRAGON

by Ian Leue

"Hey Tom!" That was P.B. our class bully. His real name is Simon but everybody calls him P.B. (Pain in the butt). "Hey Tom! Come 'ere!" When I didn't come, P.B. decided to come to me. I tried to run, but ended up under P.B.'s plump body. He is a short boy with green eyes and a buzz cut. He is a mean, gross, unkind, braggart. I'm a small boy with dark hair, a normal nose, and black eyes. I'm nice sensitive and attentive. It wasn't good. "Wimp," P.B. said, "wanna live to see tomorrow?" Without giving me time to answer he said, "to bad that that just won't be the case!"

P.B. was about to make me sausage when our principal, Mr. Kidcry-miker walked by. "break it up Simon, Tom, you need to learn to like each other!"

He shouted from across the street. With that he and P.B. left going in opposite directions. I was about to leave when I saw something in the bushes. I went over and found a small marble sized ball with blue and green stripes on it. I picked it up, felt it, pocketed it, and went home.

School went well until lunchtime. During that time, P.B. always managed to sit next to me. That day, he snuck up from behind me. "Ha!" he exclaimed as he poured his milk down my shirt. In the process of lunch he managed to get both my lunch, and his lunch down my shirt. Then he did a P.S. (pocket search) Upon finding "ball" he stole it. I was able to get it back all 8 times he stole it, and by the end of the day I was pooped.

As I was falling asleep I could've sworn I heard a cracking. "Just my imagination," I thought. "Just my imagination.....

To be continued [*we hope!*]

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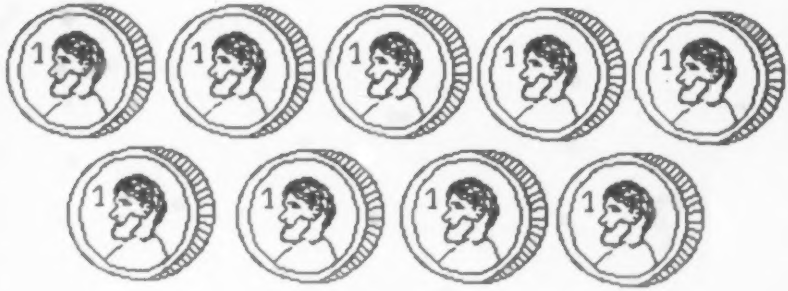
"[He] is up there with Thoreau and Emerson in the literature of rebellion" – Rolling Stone

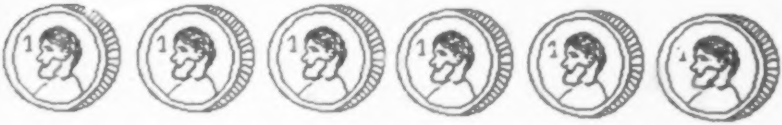
And Ian also sent us some puzzles:

IAN'S BRAINTEASERS

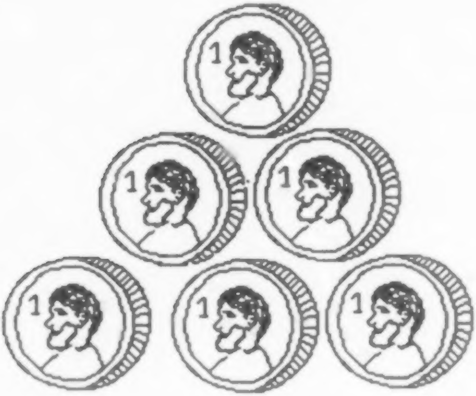
To solve these brainteasers, you will need nine pennies. First take all nine pennies and line them up. Can you make these nine pennies into three line segments of four?



Now take six of them and line them up. Can you take these six pennies and make them two straight lines of four?

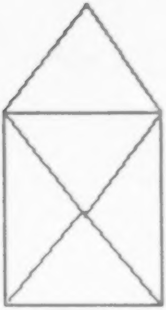


Now take these six and arrange them in a triangle pattern. Can you turn this triangle upside down by only moving only 3 pennies?



MARY'S BRAINTEASER: OUTHOUSE PUZZLE

The figure on the next page (which looks to me like an outhouse) can be drawn without lifting your pencil off the paper or crossing any lines. Try it. I used to waste a lot of time during study hall when I was in high school trying to do it, finally got it right. You can too. Just keep at it.



(Answers to these puzzlers may be found on page 128, but don't look until you have solved them (unless you get so frustrated you are ready to throw the book in the trash!).

From The Country Charter School:

Melissa Weaver sends us the following writings by children from The Country Charter School in Occidental, CA, which come from the school's bi-weekly newspaper. Melissa's description of the school follows the children's stories. Thanks, kids, thanks, Melissa.:

by Celia, age 7

The dog this is a story of is named Zip. When we go away she gets in the garbage.

The end

by Jennah, age 7

A little pony once played in a field and then a little fox came to the little pony and asked if he could play too. He said, "You can play too."

The end

by Malika Rubin-Davis, age 10 1/2

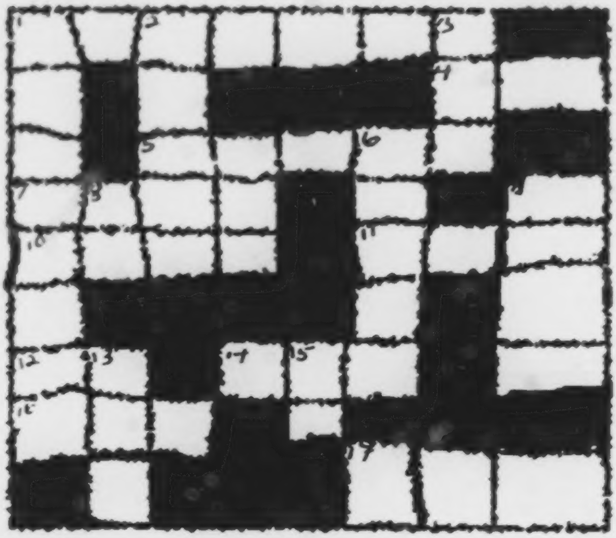
I am really excited because I am going to be in an emsemble. I am going to play the violin. I am sort of nervous because it's a whole different level. I will be playing much harder songs. I will have to practice a lot more.

My teacher said that musicians walk along a flat ground with their music and when they improve it, it's like climbing a mountain! He said that I have been walking on flat ground for a while and it's time for me to start climbing.

by Joe Prunuske-Chatham, age 9

I feel good. It is fun to be back in school. The days are getting shorter. It is getting colder. It is darker. Winter is here. The fireplace is on more and more. I am sleeping in longer as the days wear on and on. I am getting colder too! It seems that everyone is getting colder. Trees sway in the wind. They dance through the wind, swaying down with the wind. They bend and creak and groan. The wind whistles through them. I feel like I need to play soccer.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE, by Sasha Dillman, age 9



ACROSS
1 BIRD
4. SMALL WOR D
5. IMAGINATION AT NIGHT
7. TALLEST PLANT
10. PACKOF DEER
11. A THING THAT YOU ROW A BOAT WITH
12 LITTLE WORD
14. PLAYING IS _ _ _ _
16 ME AND _ _ _ _
17. A _ _ _ _ COMES OUT OF A POD

DOWN
1. ONCE A YEAR EVEN
2. OPPOSITE OF OVER.

3 SWEET POTATO.
4 COLOR
6 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ COMES FROM A OAK TREE
8 : DO _ _ ME FA SO LA TI DO
9 A RAIN - - - —
13. A FEMALE DEER
15 OPPOSITE OF DOWN

BY SASha LilliMan age 9

by Khalil Weaver, age 10

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WORDS CAN GO ↑↓↘↙↖→←

A T Q S X U E G Y I L D O W R B F P M T O I S C J U X
K U H S V X L Q R S O J M W A F C T O Z N W A V Y R I
X G W U G P R W A S I J N Z I T Y B L A E S G E L S N
Q R P A X N A Z W A S H G H S U B C O F I L E V X N S
D P A G S E J F C I R H S U B Y V C O E L X N W W M C
G J D S R H P L Q H S G Z X N D B M W N F Q J G D V O
Y A S G H P I R J Z X V N B J K O O Q C E S F W D N O C
D B S E M N I N X N Y L B D A O R O P S F W O O C L X
C T B E T L G V G J C W W S M Z L Y R P I Q S A H T I
L X L O T C J Q O T V I S Z P N O R I W C L I A J H W
T Z N O C U T V N G O Y I D R M Q J P X I A L T E W F
X E L S B T R U C L Y N E R A Q J O C W I L L T H T M J
C N H T M W U X Q U L F I E P J C Z R I D H S O C I F
D I B U N C M O A V S Y C E P R J E Z F H D L O W I M
D X I G U T A E J E F F E R S O N R F P L D S Q N M O
N A R O X E N W N V O D N Y P S M J Z F I L Q S O E A
V D P X E C J I N Y P W H I S R Z E P L A L B Q F O T
O A Q X E O C J I V R B O F S Z J A O L T D S E I C N
Z M R O O S E V E L T E W Y Z F N Y D E N N E K O A A
H S U I X J F Y L M D O E Z V E R Y O A P G B I K C R
I Q H O S L E I T M W P R V D C S - C G G K L J O E G

by Kahlil Weaver age 10

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THE COUNTRY CHARTER SCHOOL

by Melissa Weaver

The Country Charter School in Occidental, CA, is nestled in the Redwoods adjacent to Salmon Creek, one hour north of San Francisco. We rent two spacious lodges from a C.Y.O. camp complete with 500 acres for nature studies and hiking. We have recently started our second school year. All eighteen children (ages 7-11) returned after our first successful year of operation.

Prior to opening the school, three families worked diligently for two years creating a charter which was approved by the state of California. We are one of 100 state-funded charter schools with the smallest enrollment of all. We do plan to expand a little sometime in the future when we have created more stability.

Our emphasis is project-centered, Child-led, bi-lingual Spanish education. Most of our children were homeschooled prior to joining the school. Two learning coordinators and a handful of speciality teachers complete our staff. Parents volunteer twenty hours per month in the classroom, behind the scenes, or as a speciality teacher.

Each family is welcome to become a member of the board and partake in the decision-making process. Children are involved in decision-making also once a week at a classroom meeting. We have a great time together honoring and welcoming our differences, understanding that diversity is a key link in the creative process and in any living, working community.

Some of our projects and specialty classes include: creek and nature studies, carpentry, theater, weaving, music (recorder, drumming), pottery, arts, crafts, newspaper writing, math games and Aikido—with room for more!

Last year we created our vision statement for the school:

CCS is a fun, cooperative learning environment that nurtures the unfolding of each individual's creative essence and encourages responsibility to self, community and the Earth.

We look forward to hearing from some of you.

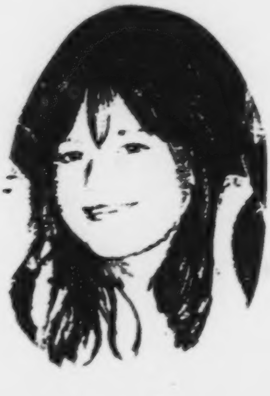
Melissa Weaver for the
Country Charter School
PO Box 918
Occidental, CA 95465
(707) 874-1994

The BIG *Wave* ~
a magazine created by the 3rd, 4th and 5th graders at The Free School, Albany, New York

(with the technical help and support of their teacher, Nancy Ost)

DEDICATION

to LACEY BOYLE



Lacey was one of our classmates. She was a good friend to us, but then she had to leave to go live in New York City. We miss her very much, so we are dedicating this magazine to her.

THE FREE SCHOOL

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ALBANY, NEW YORK 12202
518-434-3072

The Free School is an alternative school where we're not forced to learn, but we still do because we want to because we make it fun. And we learn without even noticing it. We are third, fourth and fifth graders. There are nine of us and we are all very happy here.

THE FREE SCHOOL

THE MICE

by Sarah Mercogliano

Once upon a time there was a mouse that lived in a hole in a kitchen. The kitchen was in a school and every once in a while someone would throw cheese in front of the hole. One time when the mouse went out to eat the cheese a cat came and tried to eat him. The mouse ran back into his hole. He warned the other mice there is a cat in the kitchen. Then all the mice moved into the cabinet in the kitchen that's in the school. The sink had a leak, and the cabinet was under the sink so they all got wet. They put buckets all around the cabinet to catch the drips. After 2 days it stopped and they lived happily ever after.

THE TWO BIRDS

by Nicole Korzyk

Once there was a sorcerer and his name was Zeke. He lived in the basement. One day Zeke heard noises, footsteps. Then he knew people were moving in. He never had any visitors before and he did not like the ideas of having visitors. Zeke had golfing lessons, so he went out the secret hole in the wall and he came to the fake tree and he lifted the fake tree up and went golfing.

Meanwhile the family was unpacking. The boy and girl said, "Have you seen our toy box?" The mother said, "No, but when I find it, I'll tell you. Why don't you guys just go out and play."

So they went outside and they were climbing a tree. The tree moved. Peter said, "The tree moved!" He moved the tree back. He said, "Whoa! A secret passageway. Let's find out what's down there."

Anne said, "I don't think we should."

"Don't be a sissy," said Peter. So they went down and saw a huge room. Then Zeke came back.

"Oh, no! The kids that are moving here are HERE. They know where I live. Oh, no, they're taking my ice cream," said Zeke.

Peter said, "This is good ice cream."

"Is this cookies and cream?" said Anne.

"I think so," said Peter.

Zeke came down. He said, "You kids get out of here and never come back."

The kids ran. "Who was that?" said Anne.

Peter said, "I don't know. Lets get out of here!" So they ran into the house.

Peter said, "Dad, Mom! The tree in our backyard is the secret passageway to a huge room. A guy came in while we were down there and said, 'You kids get out of here and never come back!' Here, I'll even show you." So they went to the fake tree. Peter moved it over.

"Look," he said, "there's a secret passageway."

They went down. Nobody was there.

"You guys, it must have been your imagination," Mom said. "Let's go back in the house and have dinner." So they went.

Zeke came out from behind a chair and said to himself, "While Peter and Anne are sleeping, I'll turn them in to birds."

The next day their parents were surprised that the kids were not in the house. They saw two birds and the Dad said, "How did these birds get in here? Oh well, let's go look for the kids."

THE MAGIC CAT

by Tiffany Saxon-Davis

If I had a magic crayon, I'd draw a cat. It would meow a lot and it would like to climb up on the couch. It would not be afraid of dogs. It would just scratch the dog. Her name would be Michelle. She would love my family. She would always rub them, especially me.

She loved her milk. We bought her this good cat food. She would eat her breakfast at 8 o'clock in the morning and when I would come back from school, she would eat her lunch. At 7 she would eat her dinner. When it was time to go to bed, for me and her, she would have this basket with a pillow in it. Sometimes she would sleep with me on the couch.

We made her a house in the living room. She loved her house. Only once I brought her to school. She loved my teacher and the best part was that when she would meow, I knew what she was saying. It was so fun to know what a cat was saying. Sometimes she would even give me right answers to my homework.

But then again she was magic because of the crayon, but I loved her so much.

THE MOUSE

by Kenny Wilcox

Once upon a time there was a little boy named Kenny. His mom suggested they buy a mouse. The pet store lady said it was a boy, but it was a girl. It had fourteen babies, but one died. They grew up and Kenny bought a bigger cage. It had plastic see through tubes that they could go through to lead to another cage.

MY ANIMAL VACATION

by Sadé Besong

It all started when I got on the bus. My class was going to read about animals and then write about them. When I got to school the animal they gave me was dumb, so I went to the teacher and he gave me a new one, but the new animal he gave me would take two weeks. The teacher said, "The school vacation is coming up. You can do it then. The vacation is three weeks." I said, "OK."

On the way home on the bus all of the people on the bus in my class said it was a snap. When I got home I went to my room. I got out all of my animal picture books. I was reading about lions.but I had to eat, so I went downstairs to eat. My mom was cooking. My sister was doing her homework, so I put on the TV. My show came on but I couldn't see the show. Mom said, "Dinner time," so I went to dinner. I do not like when my sister pulls out her "bunny food" and likes to say the things we are eating are too much fat. One time I went on one of her diets and I do not need to go on one of those again. Then I went to my room.

I was going to work on my paper, but my sister said to ride the bikes with her outside and put my paper down. When we got outside we rode our bikes around the block about 50 times. We did not want to ride bikes any more, so we went swimming. It was so much fun. It was so hot. We played with the other people and it was real fun.

Saturday came and I went downstairs to see my morning show. My sister was up. She's always up. I went to eat some cereal and then I started on the animal book. So far I learned lions are big cats. They hunt on things like wild pig and deer and so on. But I had to get more stuff the next day. The next day I learned that keratin makes up the claws of various mammals. Cat claws can be withdrawn into the cat's paw to keep them sharp. Lions hunt in groups and the female lions are the ones that hunt. Baby cubs stay with the mothers for a few months until they can hunt themselves.

The next day I put in my paper and I got an A+. Then my teacher said, "Next year we can do a test on it," and all the kids said, "Aaaaaaahhhhhhhhh!!!!!"

THE END

A STRAWBERRY

by Hannah Mossop

A strawberry
In a field
On a plant
It's growing
Big, fat and juicy in the hot sun
Makes me hungry
I want to pull it off
Into my opening mouth

APPLES

by Sarah Mercogliano

Big red juicy apples
Sitting on the top of the tree
Where I can't reach
I'm drooling
I want them so bad
I run inside
And look for a ladder
I find one and I
Bring it outside
I set it against the tree
And pick them

SNAKES

by Sarah Mercogliano

Snakes are green
And squigly and look slimey
They live in holes
Deep holes
And that's why I like snakes

HOCKEY

by Isaac Graves

Hockey
St. Louis blues
I'm the goalie
I crouch near the net
I block all the pucks
Mario L. skates toward me
Closer and closer and closer
He shoots the puck
The crowd goes wild
It hits my glove
It bounces back
He gets the rebound
I block it
Al M. gets the puck
Shoots it to Brett Hull.
Brett Hull passes to Wayne
Wayne G. shoots it

The other goalie blocks it
Brett Hull gets the rebound
Shoots it
It goes into the net
The crowd roars because
We won the game
I raise my stick in the air
I feel great
Because we won the Stanley
Cup.

MOTHER'S DAY POEM
by Mashama Lipscomb

My heart is
Soft like a pillow
Red like roses
I play with it
It's a present
To my mom.

JUMP ROPE
by Jessalyn Ballerano

I like to
jump rope
to skip
to hop
to do twists
in the spring
I like to jump rope
in the summer
when the sun
is bright
the grass is green

SPRING AND SUMMER
by Heather Merle

Spring & Summer
are my favorite times
I like to play and jump
through
the backyard vines
climbing up the trees
underneath the leaves
climbing up to the bird's
nest very high up in the
trees
days are hot and sunny
bees flying past me

EYES
by Heather Merle

Eyes
are wonderful
they let you see
the most beautiful things
blue, brown, black, hazel
and green eyes
eyes cry
glare
stare
or fall in love
with other eyes

FRIENDS

by Mashama Lipscomb
age 7 - thanks for reading

Once upon a time there was a little girl who liked to go outside. Her name was Girly Girl. She liked to swing on a swing. She liked to jump rope. She liked to go to the park and play with her friends. One day she went to the park and nobody was there, so she went home. She went inside the living room and everybody was in there eating and stuff because it was her birthday party. She was so surprised! She couldn't believe it. They played lots of games. They had pizza and everybody had fun.

THE END

THE BEAR'S NAME

by Jessalyn Ballerano

Once upon a time there was a girl named Jessalyn and she loved to play the piano. One day she was playing the piano when she heard a knock on the door. So she went to the door to open it and when she opened it, there was a bear. She was a little scared because it was standing up and why would he be knocking on the door if he was a bear. Before she could walk one step back he said, "Hi." "Oh my god!" She said. "What is your name?" he said. "My name is Jessalyn. What's yours?"

"Well I don't have a name," the bear said. "Why not?" Jessalyn said. "Well, one day I was taking a stroll in the woods and all of a sudden a tiny man walked in front of me and said stop! So I stopped. "You big bear, you step on me all the time! So I'm going to take your name," said the tiny man to me. "But you can't do that, can you?" As soon as I said that, he said "bop!"

Then I said out loud, "I don't remember my name." "That's because I took it. Well, I'm going now and I don't want to be stepped on, so good-by," said the man."

"And so I came to your house to get help," said the bear. "I'll help you," said Jessalyn. "OK," said the bear. "First we got to go to the place that you lost your name at," said Jessalyn. "I'll show you the way," said the bear. "OK, let's go," said Jessalyn. So they went to the place that the bear lost his name.

When they got there, Jessalyn said, "Hey, there's some tiny footprints." "Let's go," said the bear. So off they went. Soon the footprints stopped. "OK," said Jessalyn, "now we have to find the way to that man's house." They started to look around when the bear saw a tiny funny looking thing that looked like a little house. "Hey what's that?" he said as he moved some tall weeds out of the way. "I think it might be that man's house," Jessalyn said as she walked over. "Yup, that's definitely the man's house," she said looking a little bit closer just to make sure. "Let's see if anyone is home."

She bent over and with her finger, since it was so small, tapped the tiny door. Instantly the door swung open and a tiny woman popped out. "What do you want?" she said in a grouchy voice. "We want to see your husband," said Jessalyn. Before the woman could answer, a big BOOM!!! came from in the house. "Oh dear," said the woman in that same grouchy voice, "Not again." She slammed the door and went back in the house. "I guess she forgot about us," said Jessalyn.

"Let's try again," said Jessalyn. She tapped the door again. Then the door swung open again and the same woman came out. "Oh, it's you again. Oh yes, you wanted to see my husband. I'm sorry I'm not in a very good mood, if you can see (this time in a nicer voice). I'll get him right away," and the little woman went inside. A little while later she came back out with a little man. "I have to go to the children right now, so I'll leave you to talk," said the little woman and back she went.

"Wait a minute," said the little man. "I remember you; you're the bear I took a name from." "Yup and I'm going to get it back with my friend Jessalyn. What was that BOOM!?" "That was my oldest son and one of his experiments and my wife and I are allergic to lots of noise," said the man. "Oh well, how can I get my name back?" "You can't get your name back," said the man.

Then Jessalyn said, "Wait a second. I have an idea. Come here," she said to the bear and she took him back to her house. "If I bring my piano to that man's house, we can play it really loud until they give us back your name." "That's a great idea," said the bear.

The next day it was Saturday and there was no school, so the bear went to Jessalyn's house, and she was waiting there for him. Her mom was still asleep, so the bear helped her move out the piano. They took it to the little man's house and she started to play as loud as she could. The man came out and looked up at them and said, "What are you doing?! I told you that my wife and I are allergic to too much noise." "Yup, and we're going to play this piano until you give me my name back," said the bear. "But I told you I won't give you your name back.""OK," said the bear, "you're going to have to listen to this for the rest of your life."

"Oh, fine, I'll give you back your name," said the little man. "Yay!" said the bear and Jessalyn. So the man started to say some magic words, "Yee, yah, big bah, give him back his name." Then the bear said, "Hey, I remember my name." "What is it, what is it?" said Jessalyn. "It's Robin." "Well, now you know your name, so bye," said Jessalyn and off she went to her house and the bear went off to his cave.

THE END

TIFFANY'S GOOD WEEKEND

by Tiffany Saxon-Davis

Once upon a time there was a little girl at the beach. The girl wanted to go swimming and the girl went to swim. The girl splashed her brother and her brother splashed her back. And she went out of the pool and then she went to make a castle. Then she went home. She went to take a bath. She went to her room. The next day she went to school and it was The Free School. She went to have a good time. Then she went home and she liked her new bed. She said, "Mom and Dad, I love you." They lived happy ever after.

THE END

PLUTO

by Sarah Mercogliano,
Hannah Mossop and Nicole Korzyk

A long time ago in the town of Apanoxe there lived an old mean lady and she had a mean black cat just like her. Everyone that knew her or saw her thought she was a witch. One day she cast a spell on her house and moved into the sub-basement, so the next people who moved in something terrible would happen to them. One day at two o'clock in the afternoon a family moved in. There was a mother and two twin sisters. Meanwhile the witch was in the sub-basement making a potion. Upstairs the children were exploring. Then the children, Lindy and Lisha, went to explore the basement.

Lisha was tapping on the walls and when she tapped on one of the walls she heard the witch casting a spell and it went like this, WATCHA CABOTCHA LACHA POW!!! So Lisha tapped on the wall again, and then the wall BURST open and standing in front of them was the witch. She grinned at them and yelled out another spell, "YA YA SA MA UP TO PLUTO YOU TWO GO," and then in a flash they found themselves on Pluto and from that day on their mother always wondered where they had disappeared to.

THE END

HEAVEN

by Jessalyn, Heather and
Hannah Mossop

One day there sat a little girl named Mary. She was lonesome for a friend. Then suddenly Angels appeared all around her and carried her off to Heaven. Up in Heaven she met a boy named Derrick. He was up there for the same reason Mary was. They became good friends. But soon she had to leave. She said, "Why don't you come with me?" "I have to stay here," said Derrick. "Oh well, good-bye," Mary said and she left.

The next day a family moved in next door. IT WAS DERRICK!!! "I thought you had to stay in Heaven," Mary said. "Oh, but I did. Time is different in Heaven. Two days in Heaven is five minutes on earth." said Derrick. And they played together all the time and when they got older they married each other.

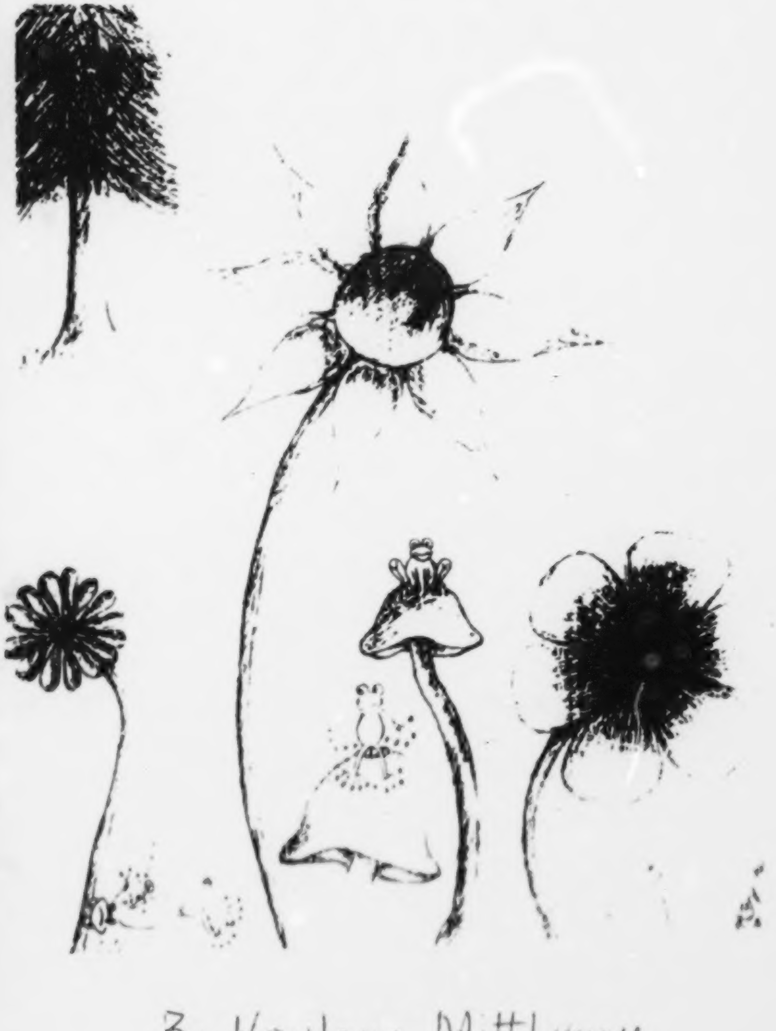
THE END

IN THE LAND OF PABI

by Nicole Korzyk and
Lacey Boyle

Far far away in the land of Pabi there lived a cat named Baby and a dog named Cody. One day they went for a walk and they found a dead smelling skunk and the skunk had a curse on it which was—who ever smells it turns into a frog. Instantly they turned to frogs. They laughed at each other because they were green and then they looked at themselves and said, "Oh no!" They hopped away following a path that lead to a king's castle. The knights came out and the frogs slipped in. They met the evil giant who picked them up and ate them. But they're still alive in his stomach. And in his stomach there was a lot of water, so they went for a swim. The giant ate too much food. He threw up and they jumped away.

On their way they met the mean king's dog, Boddie. He barked at them. They hopped away into tall grass and the dog couldn't see them. They hungrily ate grass which broke the spell. They changed back into a cat and a dog. They started to go home and started to smell the skunk, so they walked away and went to their houses and lived happily ever after.

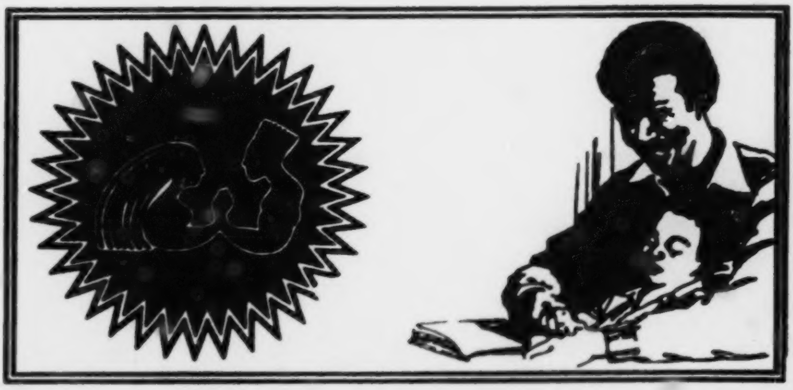


By Kaylana Mittleman

Last summer, there was a great burst of-publicity for literary kids in a couple of local newspapers. About time too! We reproduce the items below:

Whazup!

The Voice of Color in the Capital Region
Your Community and Entertainment Source



Volume 3 Number 5

Arbor Hill Kids Put Out Their Own Newspaper

Arbor Hill students have started a newspaper. It is called KNN Arbor Hill News. KNN stands tor Kids News Network. Our staff includes students from the fifth and sixth grades. There are Antoine Glascoe, Lars Ojukwu, Ke-shawn Miller, Candace Witherspoon,

Joaquin White, Carpenter Ngo, Hadji Taylor, Michael Smith-Hamlin, Scott Spruill, Taquita Jeffries, Sylvia Marquez, Yolanda Windom, Elvis Omeragic, Raheem Morris, Jelani Ginyard and teachers Mrs. Hayes and Mrs. Moore.

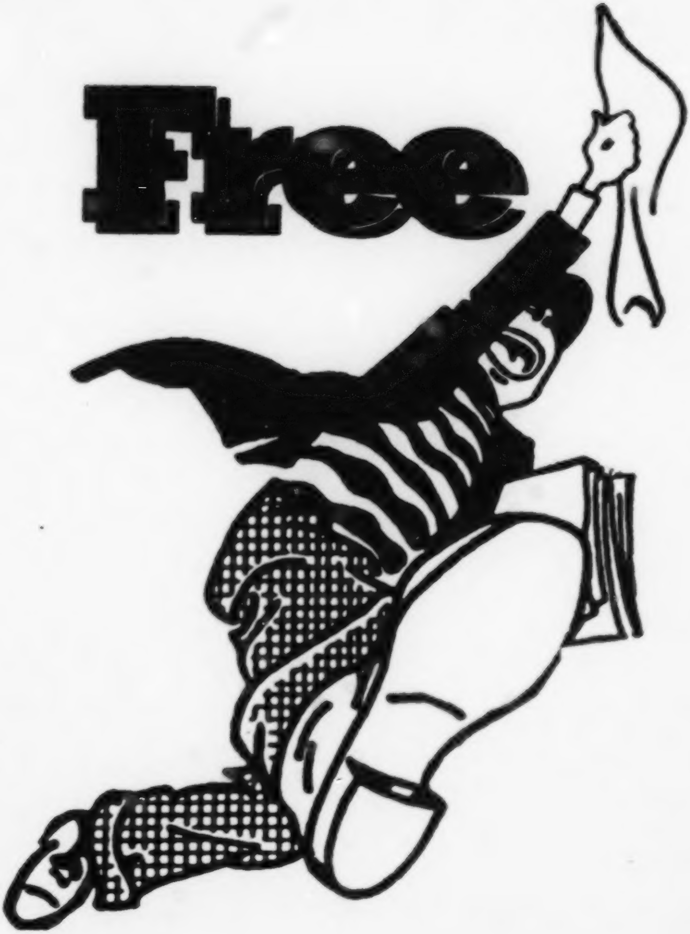
We meet every Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. in Mrs. Moore's extended day classroom. We are doing this because we want to make the best newspaper ever to represent our school.

One day we had a visitor from the Times Union. She is a reporter. Her name is Cailin Brown. Ms. Brown wants our newspaper to be the best in the region. She talked to us about how to be good reporters. She said we have to be responsible, accurate and very careful. To be a professional reporter like Cailin Brown, you must go to college for four years.

In order to keep our newspaper going, we need help. KNN Kids will be contacting local businesses to ask them if they want to advertise in the newspaper. It you want to advertise with us, please call Mrs. Hayes at (518) 462-7165 or send E-mail to the kids (see below). She will give us the message and we will get back to you. Our next issue will come out June 15th 1996. We will have a newspaper every two months during the school year.

We'll be contacting these kids by e-mail to find out if they would like to send us more material! A friend of your editor just happened to see this item! Any others of you who are on-line might think about doing the same thing. The e-mail address is:
arborhil@globalone.net

Free



enterprise

Albany alternative school students write and produce their own literary magazine.

Students exhibit great innovation with their magazine

BY PAUL GRONDAHL

Staff writer for the *Albany Times-Union*

Seven resourceful students at The Free School in Albany have scored something of a journalistic coup.

In their new literary magazine, *Mosaic,* the students will publish side-by-side an interview they conducted at City Hall with Mayor Jerry Jennings and a conversation a previous class held with Mayor Erastus Corning 2nd in May 1982, shortly before Corning's hospitalization for lung ailments that led to his death a year later.

The editorial content of the magazine is only one aspect of the learning experience for the students. They are responsible for design and layout. They sold the advertisements and solicited donated printing services. The students plan to print 200 copies of *Mosaic,* which will run about 24 pages, five of which are paid ads. The magazine was expected to be on sale in local bookstores for $2.50 in mid-March.

... The Free School is an inner-city, alternative educational program for preschool through middle school. It breaks with traditional teaching methods—students, who are given the freedom to devise their own curriculum, raised about $5,000 last year to join a humanitarian group that built a septic system and shelters for the rural poor in Puerto Rico.

Mosaic is a fund-raiser for the older students at The Free School, who will use the money to pay for train tickets to Washington state's capital, Olympia, site of this year's annual meeting of the National Coalition of Alternative Schools April 8-16.

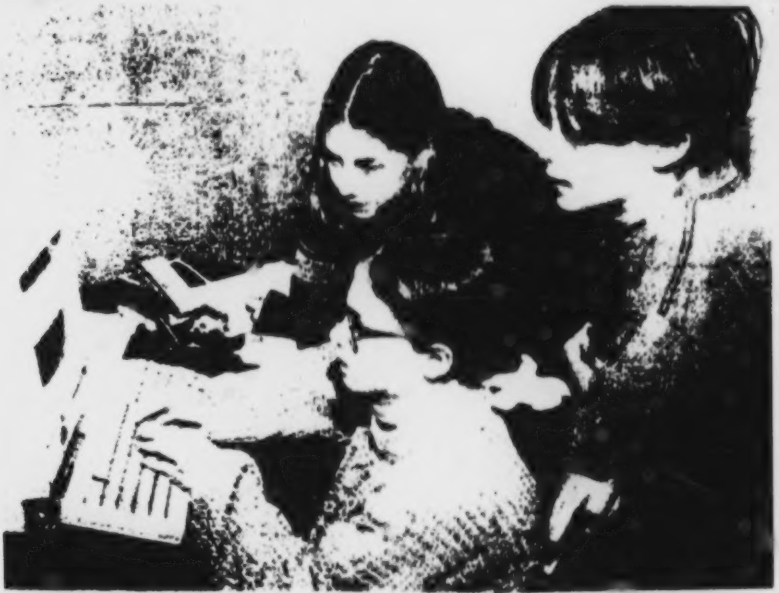
"We can only do so many bake sales," said Chris Mercogliano, their teacher and magazine adviser. "They came up with the idea for the magazine and I've been pleased with how hard they've worked at it. It's been a good project for these kids, because they've all fallen into the areas where their talents lie." The amateur journalists, ages 11 to 13, managed to break through the political facade of their subjects to a degree perhaps greater than their professional press counterparts.

For instance, Corning, who displayed an aristocratic reserve and rarely discussed his personal life during 42 years as mayor, opened up to an unusual extent to The Free School kids. He expressed concern about how little time he had for his family because of the job. "Well, they put up with it, I suppose," Corning said. "What I mean is that I'm out so much, and I think they wish I were around more ... If you're going to have a political career, you haven't got much time for anything else."

The generation-to-generation connectedness of Albany Democratic politics is revealed in the Jennings interview, in which the current mayor recounts his growing up in the shadow of Corning. "I knew Mayor Corning," Jennings said. "He was a strong leader, and those were certainly different times then. And I learned from him that for an elected official, politics are about helping people. I try to remember that on a daily basis when I make decisions here in the city."

The adolescents can be aggressive questioners, such as when they tried to pin down Jennings on his re-election ambitions. "That would be a scoop I would be giving your magazine," the mayor said. "Really, I'm not sure. I'm in the third year of my term now and by the end of this year I'll probably make my decision." To the students' query about what Jennings thinks of Gov.

George Pataki, Jennings shot back, "Your tape isn't long enough."



WORKING ON THE MAGAZINE at The Free School in Albany are Jessica Graves, 11, at the keyboard, Lily Mercogliano, 12, and Teddy Becker, 11, right.

Credit for the magazine's name, *Mosaic,* goes to Lily Mercogliano, 12, the teacher's daughter. "It kind of popped into my head and we all liked the way it meant a lot of small, different pieces making up a whole picture," Mercogliano said. ...The other *Mosaic* staffers are students Jessica Graves, Eleanor Mossop, Zach Korzyk, 11, Lisha Mittleman, 13, and Jesse Hyler, 12. ..

And we received some additional contributions from two Free School students, Gaby and Ted Becker (now both ex, Ted having graduated since the Mosaic *interview came out)):*

THE WIND OVER THE SEA

by Gabrielle Becker

I am like the sea
I am like the wind
Both are horrible and beautiful
just like me
Sometimes
I am calm
Just like the wind on some awesome, perfect night
The sea can lap up at the shore
in rhythm so deep
and sweet
almost like my happiness
and when I feel complete
some times
I don't know how I should
make up my mind
have you ever
seen the wind start up
and die away within half an hour?

The wind changes its course, its mind
all the time
I am also like the sea
one second I am laughing
washing cool over dry beaches
and then
I am upset, crazy, uncontained
the rip tide pulling down
any one who comes to close
any one I trust
or I can be like glass
a mountain lake
immaculate

before the waves come back

VEGGIE MONSTER

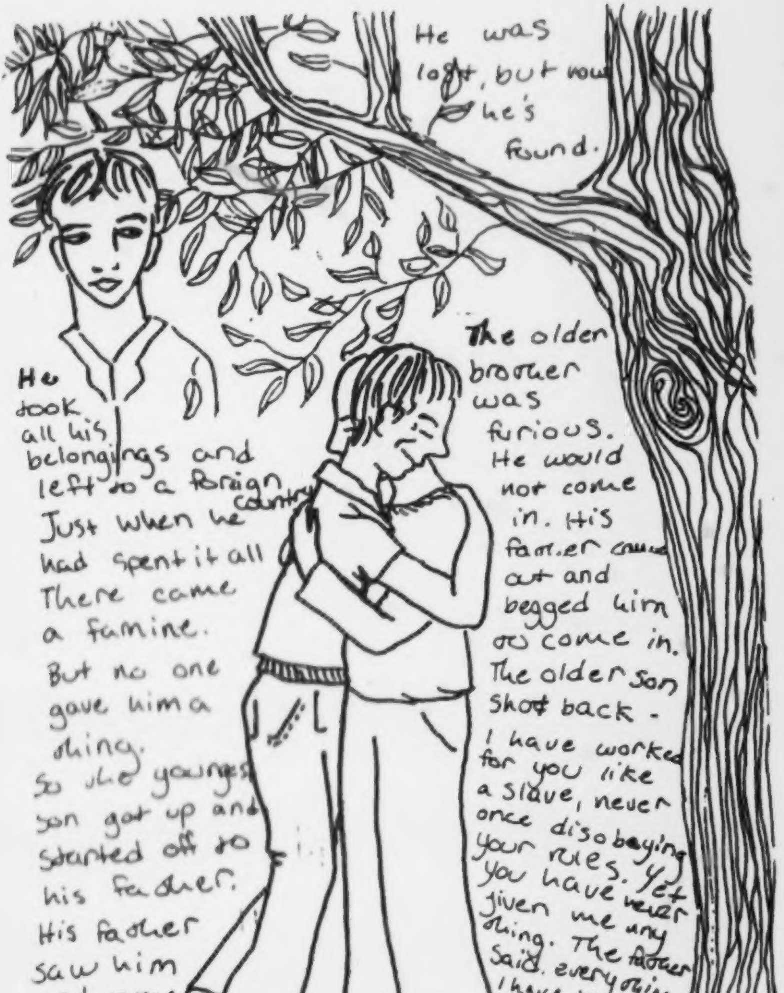
I am like a caterpillar who still needs its tree
I still need my parents to be there for me
Me and my fellow caterpillars massacre the trees
Just as my brother and I,
We make cur parents broke
Until of course we're old enough to move out and
to vote

Caterpillar in her cocoon
Me in my room
If a caterpillar were to fall from her tall tree
She would die, just as I
If from my cocoon of blankets in my loft bed
I fall, then I am sure I'd crack my soft head

One time I sat upon a caterpillar
I am sad to say it left a stain
Yet I am like that caterpillar in that
I leave a stain on the lives of those I know

I will frown and I will glow
And like a caterpillar I will grow
I am still a small caterpillar
Some day to be a butterfly

But until then I will climb
The tallest trees
Eat the greenest leaves
Because who knows
If tomorrow or the next day
Some one won't accidentally come and sit on me.


He was lost, but now he's found.
He took all his belongings and left to a foreign country. Just when he had spent it all There came a famine. But no one gave him a thing. So the youngest son got up and started off to his father. His father saw him and came up and hugged and Kissed him.
The older brother was furious. He would not come in. His father came out and begged him to come in. The older son shot back - I have worked for you like a slave, never once disobeying your rules. Yet you have never given me any thing. The father said. everything I have is yours.
You see my son, he was dead, but now he's alive!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The poem below was written by Ted Becker for his grandmother upon reading a Longfellow poem "The Arrow and the Song" sent to him by her.

THE TREE
by Ted Becker

There was a tree that was very small
Someone stepped on it and crushed it all
Then I left that place for very long
and when I came back it was big and strong.

THE ARROW AND THE SONG
by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song.

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

HULA POPPER*
by Ted, Gaby & Larry Becker

Sam liked to write stories on a computer. He made a book about a happy dinosaur. His story was funny. The dinosaur liked to eat apples. Sam went to see a lawyer. He told the attorney that he was having a problem with a noisy neighbor who was always playing a boom box too loud. It was so loud that the mice in his neighbor's house ran out and over to Sam's house and harassed his cat!

**Note: a hula popper is a popular surface lure for bass. Larry Becker is a lawyer who loves to fish. Ted, his son, was eleven and Gaby, his daughter, was age thirteen when they wrote this gem together.*

This was just too much for poor Sam. As he told the story, Sam threw his hat on the rug in the lawyer's office, frightening the secretaries, receptionist, and the other lawyers, who all gathered around to hear Sam's story at compounded multiple billing rates. The lawyer told him to politely ask his neighbor to be quiet and if he refused, to smack his neighbor with a blunt hula popper! Sam followed his lawyer's advice.

* * * *

Both Sam and the lawyer were convicted. The attorney got five years in the slammer; Sam got three years probation and had to perform 100 hours of community service.

This has been a public service announcement. The opinions of the authors are not necessarily those of the management.

Note: The dancers below are Gaby's, as is the cover illustration of the couple embracing.

Jerry Mintz, editor of a newsletter he calls AERO (Alternative Education Resource Organization), gave me permission to use a couple of pieces from the current issue.

TEACHING AT AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL IN RUSSIA

by Ananda Kantner

(Editor's note: About a year ago I received a letter from 19 year old Ananda Kantner, Daughter of Bruce Kantner of the Gaia Education Outreach Institute. She asked if I could arrange a situation for her in which she could spend some time at an alternative school in Russia. I put her in touch with Alexander Adamsky, President of the Eureka Free University. Alexander's wife directs an alternative school in Moscow, and they agreed to let Ananda teach English at the school and live with them at their apartment. JM)

(Jerry Mintz, this is for your newsletter. Feel free to edit as necessary. Thank you again for helping me set up my adventure in Russia! Ananda Kantner:)
Last September, instead of setting out for college or a new job like most of my peers, I set out for Russia. As my airplane left the ground, all I knew about my immediate future was that I was going to Moscow to help teach English in a small "alternative" elementary school and that for over half a year I'd be staying with a Russian family I'd never met before and spoken with only twice on the telephone. But I had my two heavy suitcases in my hands, a bunch of Russian words in my head, and a great deal of excitement and curiosity.

The day after I arrived I discovered what the next 7 1/2 months of my life would be about. There was a blue-walled classroom in the corner of an old school building, tucked away beneath towering concrete apartment buildings. There were about forty-five energetic second, third, and fifth graders who bounced in and out of the room during the day. There was the Russian-native English teacher who had some pretty serious questions about the English language. I soon found out that my official tasks would be to help the pupils with reading, writing, pronunciation, and conversation. I also saw that my immediate task was to start to find out about this Eureka Ogonyok school and what made it "alternative."

A few days after my arrival I attended a seminar with the other teachers of the school and several of the school's advisors. The topic of the seminar was how a certain complex dialectical theory related to teaching children in the school. Even with the joint translation help of several teachers and scientists, I was almost completely lost (and in fact one of the teachers hinted to me that almost all the teachers were pretty confused, even though the seminar was conducted in their native language).

After that, and after a few attempts to find out from the director (whose family I lived with) more about some of the philosophical foundations of her school, I resigned myself to direct observation and, of course, getting to know the children.

From the first day, I was struck by the students' enthusiasm for learning. Thinking back to my own foreign language classes in public high school and even in private elementary school, I remember among my classmates a pervasive apathy and reluctance to take active involvement in the process of learning. At Eureka Ogonyok, the situation was completely the opposite. The children were fascinated by the new English letters, sounds, words, and grammar and were always eager to try to speak, even outside of classes. At home I frequently heard my 9-year-old Russian "sister" conversing in English with her friends and family. When, early in the morning, I would hear from across my room a loud "Good Morning!" I would often wonder for a moment which country I was really in.

Part of this enthusiam for learning should be credited to the teachers' attitude toward their students, which reflected nothing of their collective authoritarian past. At Eureka Ogonyok I felt the teacher's genuine trust, respect, interest, and desire for friendship with all their students. And because of the teachers' nurturing attitude, the freedom allowed the students seemed to give rise to harmony and cooperation rather than isolating competition or irresponsibility. In our English classes, the majority of the students would work equally willingly—and effectively—by themselves, with their peers, or with their teachers.

Teaching English in a foreign country, let alone withstanding Moscow's dark winter desolation, certainly wasn't always easy. But even on the darkest, coldest days, there always seemed to be an uplifting spirit within the walls of Eureka Ogonyok. The remarkable mixture of freedom, cooperation, creativity, and dedication to learning, present in everything from the artwork in the classrooms, to the seasonal festivals and celebrations, to written reports and conversations in the hallways, showed that this unique school has been truly successful in embracing a holistic form of education for its students and fostering the democratic values which will surely be important to the evolution of Russian society.

Gaia Education Outreach Institute: Ph/Fax: (603) 654-6705; geo@igc.org Derbyshire Farm, Temple, NH 03084. Gaia has a home page on the Web at http://www.well.com/user/cmty/GEO. They're good folks. Send them an e-mail. They'll answer you!

Last summer Jerry participated in a French-American alternative summer camp in the Pyrenees near Thélème, run by an old friend Patrice Crève, who is board chairman of the school, which he also co-founded.

REPORT ON THE FRENCH CAMP BY A CAMPER

by Anthony Santoro

My name is Anthony Santoro and I'm 14 years old. I've been homeschooling for 7 years. I found out about the camp from my mother, who had heard about it on the homeschool bulletin board on Prodigy.

I believe the highlights of the trip for me were the democratic meetings and learning about the French culture. Also, the hiking in the mountains, and going to the Dali Museum in Spain.

The thing I liked most was the democratic meetings, where everyone had a fair say. As a homeschooler I had never been exposed to democratic meetings. One of the reasons I particularly enjoyed them is that almost everywhere I go in ordinary life it is something like a dictatorship situation, such as work, or a regular summer camp. The meetings made me feel like I had some authority over my own life.

I found that at first some of the kids didn't appreciate the meetings as I did. Towards the end, I think they pretty much felt the same. Everyone kind of held back in the beginning, not really open. But later people felt more comfortable to express what they wanted to say. I don't think that having it in French and English had any negative effect. In fact it might have been even better, because it wasn't too quick; it gave you time to think.

One thing I learned from the French culture: When I came back, I went to church and they were saying that people were inherently evil, and you had to fight that and bestow your goodness on them. I just couldn't listen to that any more. It almost disgusted me. I had learned that this wasn't true at all. I had seen the goodness come through, not just through the meetings, but just in talking to people everywhere—like going into a store, and sitting next to an old man on a bench and having a conversation. People were so nice. It would be difficult to do that in America.

I feel that I have changed as a result of this experience. I've seen things from a different point of view than I've ever experienced in America. Now I think I understand better why people travel the world.

(Ed. note from Jerry: We are now planning future travels, including the possibility of another camp next summer at Thélème. Contact AERO if you are interested). 516-621-2195. Fax 516-625-3257. E-mail jmintz@igc.apc.org.

ARTHUR MORGAN SCHOOL

from the viewpoint of a former student

by Paul Houde

The call from my father came around 1700 PST in mid-April. We made the small talk as usual and then the reason behind the call was explained. His new job as editor of the *Journal of Family Life* and *ΣΚΟΛΕ, the Journal of Alternative Education*, had reminded him of an experience I had related to him on a recent visit he made to my residence in California. Putting that tale on paper for *ΣΚΟΛΕ* readers was what was asked of me. Of course, the only appropriate answer was "yes." After I got over the initial shock and excitement of my father's request, I managed to get my big head back through the rec room door. To me, it was no small boost to my ego to know that my father thought I was capable of the task.

Well, after changing tacks and emptying the waste basket several times, I realized that I didn't really know much about writing. In the end I decided to tell the tale straight out and let you draw your own conclusions. Now that the excuses are out of the way, I'll fill in a little background to put the story into perspective.

I was born into a military family as the second son in a five boy string. My childhood memories are full of mischief, fun, and location changes due largely to the military lifestyle. The mischief I got myself into I define as "standard military issue" for a family of five boys—sorry, Mother. As for my parents, I have always had a deep respect for them and it hurt me quite deeply when I felt that I had disappointed them. This respect kept me out of quite a lot of trouble and the social skills they taught me still serve me well.

The setting for my tale is in the beautiful Black Mountains of western North Carolina, in a small community called Celo. The Arthur Morgan School was located there and I was lucky enough to be allowed to attend the 8th and 9th grades there. The school was coed and communal in operation and nature and, for me, my first major break from the home front. I was now free of all my parental constraints; those my parents imposed and those I imposed on myself. Can you just feel my elation at being in almost total control of my life and actions for the first time? Needless to say, I got in my share of trouble. Mostly, I was just hard to handle—there were no twelve page damage reports and I didn't interact with intent to harm anyone. I think the school staff thought of me as one of the main instigators of mutiny and mayhem but I don't recall having as much influence on the other students attending the school as they said I did. To sum it up, I was somewhat of a troublemaker and I was free to wreak havoc on the school and surrounding community.

By now you have a feel for the situation so I'll commence with the story. During this particular school day we (the students) were tasked with collating the *Manual Of Simple Burial*, a publication written by Ernest Morgan (one of the school founders) and printed at the school print shop. A more tedious job has not been devised yet. Spending this beautiful, sunny day inside while picking up pieces of paper and putting them inside each other so somebody else could benefit from my labor was not on my list of things to do. Of course, in reality, we did benefit from this work since whatever benefited the school trickled down to us in some way, shape, or form eventually.

Anyway, the general consensus among the other students fell in line with mine (with a little prodding), so we did as little work as we could possibly get away with, as is normal for most young adults my age. Is that a bias? Later, I found out that the print shop staff were counting on us to finish the collating that day so they could do their part in the process. Pang, was that a feeling of guilt I was experiencing? It was partly my fault that things turned out like they did. I guess I used my influence negatively and spurred the other students into being lazy like I wanted to be. Now how was I going to fix this mess?

The answer was quite simple, really. I just used collating as an excuse for sneaking out of the dorms at night. The lure of being with my peers, at night, and with no supervision was a strong enticement to me at that age and one that I had used many times during my stay at AMS. After a student pow-wow where I presented my idea, it was decided that we should have a group sneak-out that night. Since it was my idea, I was given the responsibility of making it happen. If I chose to stay in that night, no one would be coming to the collating party.

It took some time but, finally, the day came to an end. This year I was residing in the dorm called Ebling with two roommates. My dorm parents were Pablo and Nan Cope and their two daughters, Heidi and April. Truly wonderful people my dorm parents were, and the children were as cute as they could be. My sleeping quarters were in an out-building behind the Cope's house. The advantages of not living in the house were obvious on nights like these. I waited about an hour after the customary goodnights were said and then I proceeded to do the deed. My roommates elected not to go for whatever reasons they had and I was off into the pitch black night by myself. To me, I was repeating a drama I had played on countless other nights but there was a difference this night that I was not made aware of till about five years after completing school at AMS. The difference was Pablo Cope. For whatever twist of fate that had brought him out of his house that night, put him in a vantage point to see my departure from Ebling. Unbeknownst to me, I had gained a tracker.

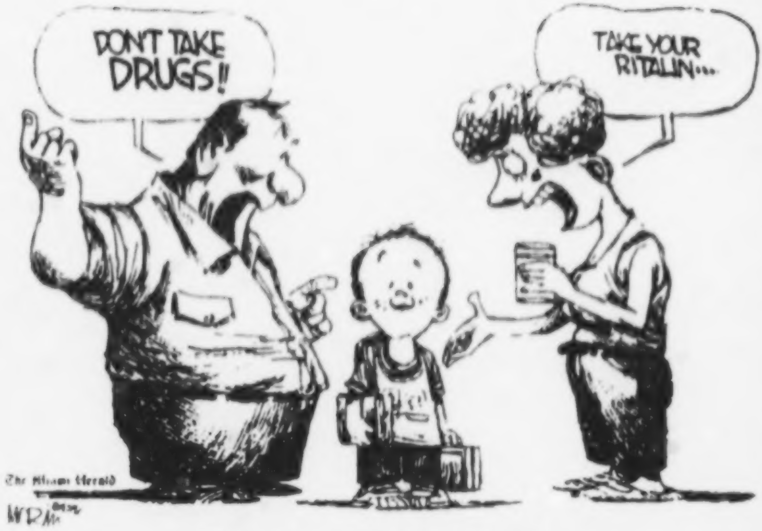
Pablo told his wife that he was "going to see what the boy was up to" and proceeded to give chase. It was a good mile or two trek through the woods to get me to the first dorm on my list: Silver. I woke the prospective collators there and said I would pick them up on my return from the other dorms. Next was Woodside, the dorm I had stayed in during the previous year; then came Dewing. Finally we were set to make the journey to the school facilities—Pablo in tow. Of course, the school buildings were locked when we got there, but I had overcame all those obstacles in my first year at AMS. The other students set themselves up to collate while I raided the kitchen for our midnight snacks. That's pretty much it: we collated until all the manuals were complete, erased any records of our infiltration, and went back to our dorms to await the coming day.

The reaction of the staff the following day was much milder than I had anticipated but my personal satisfaction was soaring. After Pablo told me, some five years later, that he had been there through the whole event with me, the staff's reaction finally made sense. To hear him relate of his surprise at the difference between what he expected and what he found gave me one of those good feelings that are treasured for a lifetime in memory.

Thanks to you for the project, Dad, for it allowed me to relive that day in my memory once again.

As always, your loving son, Paul W. Houde

Paul Houde lives in North Carolina with his wife and kids. Like his father before him, Paul is a member of the Air Force. His father Frank, now retired, is one of the editors of both ΣΚΟΛΕ and the Journal of Family Life. *Thanks, Paul and Frank! That was a great tale!*



DON'T TAKE DRUGS!!
TAKE YOUR RITALIN...
The Miami Herald
WRM

JUST SAY NO!

The following article was reprinted from the spring issue of the NCACS (National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools) Newsletter. Jeanie Douha is a long-time teacher at Contra Costa School in the community of the same name in California. This article, without explicitly spelling it out, makes abundantly clear Jeanie's truly empathic impact on her students as a teacher and friend (and vice versa).

TEEN SEXUALITY: MYTHS AND REALITIES

Young People Speak Out on the Issue of Sexuality in a Scary and Complicated World

by Jeanie Douha and her English Class at Contra Costa Alternative School

Some folks believe that teen sexuality is characterized by irresponsible promiscuity resulting in unwanted pregnancies, kids and the spread of the HIV virus. Others who deny or condemn teen sexuality oppose sex ed in schools, urging celibacy and reductions in benefits/ services for those young people who do become parents. The media continue to glorify sexuality and depicts suggestive appearances and behaviors by people at younger ages than ever. Music, film, video and magazines are clearly flaunting teen sexuality as a (most often desirable, but sometimes ambivalent or unwanted) reality, occasionally with accompanying encouragement of safe sex practices. The issue of sexual preference is another explosive area. Some people stereotype and harass those whose preferences are at odds with their own; others revel in their newfound freedom and relief in being able to express who they are.

The reality is that the exploration of one's sexuality is a normal part of human development. Beliefs, desires and practices vary. Social and family pressures and expectations as well as messages from our individual bodies shape behavior. The subject merits open discussion, honesty, questioning and education.

People attending NCACS conferences in the past have requested more workshop discussion of these issues. Both in response to this and as an outgrowth of the evolving environment in which CCAS students are dealing more with sexuality, including issues of sexual preference, teen pregnancies, etc., (CCAS will be facilitating a workshop at the April conference. (CCAS students are preparing a journal of writings on the topic to handout in Washington which discuss personal experiences and the issues in general. The following are excerpts from some of the writings. We hope that others are encouraged to write and speak out and offer support in helping all of us to find healthy, healing and joyous ways to think about and explore our sexuality.

> I recently made a whole bunch of new friends, and one of them ...has AIDS. Sometimes I think why am I getting close to her when she's going to die. ...I'm just opening myself up to a lot of pain. But then I'm ashamed of myself that I could even think such a thing. My friend needs solid, close, supportive friends, not fair weather friends.
>
> Be careful in both who you sleep with and how. Sex isn't even absolutely necessary to be close with another person; society may say otherwise but I've found I almost feel more intimate just falling asleep in my lover's arms than when having sex. Closeness is good, intimacy is good, but for God's sake be careful.
>
> I think that it is easiest/safest to be bisexual at this school for me... At home, I would just be a "fag," and have experienced this. I've dealt with it in work environments as well, even without giving any signs of this. School has been a safe place to be myself without fear. It's the only place I let my guard down and can be honest... as

> long as I've been here there's been a rule that no racist, sexist, homophobic, or generally bigoted remarks should be made...

Another student speaks about her experiences of verbal and physical harassment for being perceived as lesbian when she held hands with her best friend in junior high. She speaks of the irony of having a boyfriend at the time, and he was in turn assumed to be gay. This student presently identifies herself as bisexual, discussing the notion of bisexuality as trendy:

> I consider most people bi-sexual, and now people are just acting out their curiosities or fantasies....many people consider bisexuality to be a half-assed halfway point between straight and gay, not really valid or valued. I believe that bisexuality is a reality and not simply a trend that can be dismissed.

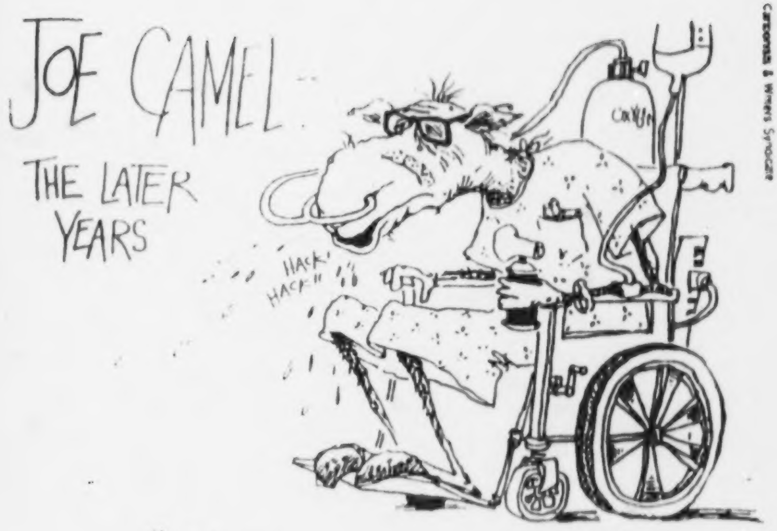
Another student wrote about attitudes towards bi/homosexuality, stating that women seem more comfortable with it than men:

> ...males are more homophobic because they're more afraid of the possibilities of their homosexuality... the cause of this problem in my opinion is the ego.. a block in the path of spiritual growth.
>
> I think every junior high in America needs to have one class on the subject of sex in order to pass to high school, so that when young people decide to have sex they will know the responsibility that comes along with it.
>
> I think a lot of teens are having sex without using any morals at all. I can't say that it's their fault. I just think that they aren't thinking about their lives ahead of them, they're only living in

> the moment. The reason I say it's not 100% their fault is because they are young and some are very gullible and easy to get taken advantage of...

This writer continues with a discussion of the sad reality of AIDS and the importance of HIV folks educating others. She continues on relationships:

> ... I wish everyone could just be with one person and stay with that person and always love them... become close to that person and never go behind their back... a relationship is far more precious than being promiscuous.
>
> Many people take sex for granted. Relying on it to make a relationship work. It is unbelievable how many people can believe that you must have sex to show you care. Then there are people who just take what they want.... There is a certain maturity that comes with having sex. You have to know all of its dangers and possible outcomes. I believe that you should know the person very well, almost as well as you know yourself. You need to have complete trust in your partner, and know about their sexual history.
>
> Personally I believe people should not have sex till they are definitely in love. Sex is too sacred to waste on just anyone, especially if you are a virgin.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This article was reprinted from The Rotarian *for September,1996, and sent to us through the alertness of the mother of one of our editors. Thanks, Priscilla!*

GUEST EDITORIAL
by Colman McCarthy

The New Generations want to learn peacemaking. Let's teach them.

In the early 1980s, two questions kept lingering in my mind:

- If peace is what all governments claim they want, and if peace is what all human hearts yearn for, then why aren't we teaching the art of peacemaking in our schools?
- Can peacemaking, in fact, be taught?

As a journalist, I took the usual route to find the answers: I interviewed the experts at "think tanks," from shallow end to deep end. But the experts wanted to ponder. Let's have a conference. Appoint a task force. Put out a report. In 10 years, if we hurry, we'll have the answers. Forget about that. So I took the direct route, by going to the public high school nearest my office in downtown Washington, DC., U.S.A., and asking the principal, "May I come in as a volunteer and teach a course on peacemaking?" "Sure," she said, "give it a try." Next semester, I was there. Since 1982, I've had more than 5,000 students in my classes. Soon after the success at the high school, I took the course to the University of Maryland and Georgetown University Law Center, as well as offering summer classes for college interns in Washington, DC. I can report that not only do the young want to learn peacemaking but they are eager to find ways to put the art into practice in both their personal and political lives. Ideas first, then action.

So I have my answers. Yes, peacemaking can be taught. And the reason schools aren't teaching it is because not enough of us—parents, citizens, taxpayers—are demanding that it be taught, or are offering our time and energy to teach a course and get things started.

As an academic subject, peacemaking isn't hard to teach. The goal is to expose students to the idea that alternatives to violence exist and that the past and present are filled with examples and practitioners. A semester-long course includes reading, discussing, and writing about essays by Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Albert Schweitzer, the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Albert Einstein, Dorothy Day, Oscar Arias, Lanzo del Vasto, Sargent Shriver, Gene Sharp, Adin Ballou, Leo Tolstoy, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Alva Myrdal, and others.

If some, or most, of these names are not familiar to you—eight are Nobel Peace Prize winners—it's because you, like me, went to schools that didn't teach peace. We graduated as peace illiterates.

When I give lectures at colleges and universities, I ask the audience to take a quiz. Identify these figures by raising your hands if you know them: Napoleon Bonaparte, Julius Caesar, Robert E. Lee, Jane Addams, Muhammad Yunus, George Fox.

Almost always, all hands go up on the first three—the generals—and no hands rise on the last three: Jane Addams, Nobel Peace laureate, social worker, and author of "Peace and Bread in a Time of War"; Muhammad Yunus, the internationally hailed founder/director of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which spreads peace through low-interest loans to poor people, mostly women villagers; and George Fox, the founder of the Quakers in England and what would become the American Friends Service Committee, also a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

You don't need to be a schoolmaster to conclude from the quiz that everyone knows the peace-breakers, but not the peacemakers. We are taught about those who conquered opposing armies, but not about those who conquered hate, injustice, and poverty. We are taught about those who practiced violence, but not about those who won victories through nonviolence.

This isn't only about peacemaking. To study the ideas, history, theories, and literature of peace is to bring the young into the world of conflict resolution skills, community service, and character education. It is to open their minds to Gandhi's truth: "Nonviolence is the weapon of the strong." Or the belief of Martin Luther King: "The choice is not between violence and nonviolence, but between nonviolence and non existence." Children want to learn peacemaking because they see with fresh eyes the world's violence. At the beginning of this decade, the globe's nations were spending U.S. $900 billion a year on arms and armies. Nearly 80 million people have been killed in wars since 1900, a 500-percent increase over the 19th century. An estimated 40,000 people a month are killed in current wars or conflicts. Then there are the unofficial wars: the violence of spousal abuse, environmental destruction, and the institutional support of abusive economic systems that result in 20 percent of the world's population earning less than $1 a day, and the percentage increasing. The silent war on the poor sees 35,000 children dying per day of hunger-related illnesses.

Students are eager to learn peacemaking. They understand that it is much more than a noble ideal, it is also a basic survival skill. Learning nonviolence means that we dedicate our hearts, minds, time, and money to a commitment that the force of justice, the force of organized resistance to corrupt power, and the force of character-based education are always more effective, moral, and enduring than the force of fists, guns, and armies.

Let's do more than give peace a chance; let's give it a place in the curriculum of every school in the world.

And how does it get into the classrooms of those schools? Maybe it means no more than asking the local principal or headmaster, "Can I come here to be a peace teacher?" The answer is likely to be twofold: "Yes," and, "What took you so long to get here?"

• *Colman McCarthy is a columnist for The Washington Post and the director of the Center for Teaching Peace, 4501 Van Ness Street, Washington, DC 20016, U.S.A. He was a featured speaker at the 1995 R.I. President's Conference on Family Values and Community Service.*

True or False:

Homeschoolers don't have access to group experiences.

Read Growing Without Schooling magazine's recent features on homeschoolers' sports teams, theater groups, music groups, folk dancing groups, book discussion groups,teenagers' study groups, writing groups, and environmental groups and you decide.

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with any of the features listed above.

FOUR REVIEWS BY CHRIS MERCOGLIANO:

Talking Walls, the Stories Continue
by Margie Burns Knight
Illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien
Published by Tilbury House Publishers
Gardiner, ME 1996; 36 pages $9.95 (paper)

Margy Knight and Anne O'Brien are back with more walls that talk. The cover of this beautiful sequel depicts the success of the first edition, which I reviewed in the Winter '96 issue. A group of sixth graders from an Indianapolis grammar school are shown painting an entrance wall at a nearby apartment complex, a community service project they chose to undertake after reading *Talking Walls* in their social studies class. The residents were so grateful that they notified a local TV station and then let the kids use their pool for an end-of-the-year picnic.

Walls are indeed a powerful metaphor, and Knight and O'Brien once again do a brilliant job of drawing kids into other times and other peoples by bringing to life the stories contained in the walls they built. This new edition starts out with an imaginary wall, one in *A Midsummer's Night's Dream,* which was first performed at a wedding in England in the 1500s. The wall was built by Thisby's father to prevent her from visiting her boyfriend, Pyramus. Knight leaves the reader with this quote from Shakespeare's play. Snout, playing the part of the wall, is speaking:

> *In this same interlude it doth befall*
> *That I, one Snout by name, present a wall:*
> *And such a wall, as I would have you think,*
> *That had in it a crannied hole or chink*
> *Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,*
> *Did whisper often very secretly.*

Now there's how to capture an 11 year-old's attention and interest him or her in social studies! Knight, a former social studies and history teacher herself, delights us once again with prose that is precise, but also engaging and not lacking in poetry; while O'Brien's paintings, which are sweeping and yet exquisitely focused, give the words an unforgettable setting. Together they take us from the deserts of ancient Morocco to the high peaks of modern Tibet. Meanwhile, they don't shy away from addressing present-day political realities as they attempt to convey the nuances of culture to young readers.

Kids, listen to what the great walls of the world have to say! Parents and teachers, read these books to your kids!

Summerhill School, a New View of Childhood
by A. S. Neill
Edited by Albert Lamb
Published by St Martin's Press
New York, N.Y. 1993

> The function of a child is to live his own life—not the life his anxious parents think he should live, nor a life according to the the purpose of the educator who thinks he knows what is best. All of this interference and guidance on the part of adults only produces a generation of robots.
>
> —A.S. Neill

Thanks to Albert Lamb, Neill's daughter Zoe and the Summerhill trust, A. S. Neill's best known book about freedom and democracy in education will not be passing out of the mainstream conversation regarding schools any time soon. When Lamb, a former Summerhill student who later returned to teach at his *alma mater*, learned that Summerhill was no longer in print in the U.S. and that therefore college education classes were no longer reading it, he received the go-ahead from Zoe, who assumed leadership of the school after her father died, and the Summerhill Trust to edit a new version.

And what a superlative job Lamb has done! This time around the book does not reflect the numerous marketing biases of a publisher and editor anxious to make Neill's radical concepts more palatable to a post-fifties American audience. Instead, here at last we get the real, unabridged Neill, including an entire chapter he had written about his association with Wilhelm Reich, the creator of a radical therapeutic model called "Orgonomy;" and, like Neill, a firm believer in children's capacity to regulate and govern themselves. The Reich chapter was omitted from the original American version because at the time Reich was a highly controversial figure in this country, his books having been banned and even burned by the FDA.

The series of forewords, prefaces and introductions at the beginning of the book in and of themselves make for fascinating reading. The foreword contains the memories of Neill's uncanny way of relating to kids of a former Summerhill student who attended the school in the early sixties, when the original version of the book was being released for the first time. Lamb then tells us in his preface that he was glad to have the opportunity to re-edit *Summerhill* because he had never felt that it very accurately reflected the school he had known either as a student or as a member of the staff. An editor's biases can have an enormous impact on the shape and tone of any book, and so here in this new version we find one that stands well apart from the original. My guess is that the irascible old Scotsman would be quite pleased with the results.

Lamb also points out—and quite rightly—that while only six hundred or so young people have passed through Summerhill's doors since Neill founded it in 1921, the ideas expressed in Neill's lectures and writings have altered the attitudes of millions around the world. While I am no Neill worshipper and do not consider myself a "Summerhillian," I will always honor Neill for his ability to articulate so adroitly the difference between freedom and license and for his unflinching belief in a child's right to determine his or her own reality.

For those who have never read *Summerhill* or who may need a little brushing up, here's a taste of classic Neill from the new edition: "The function of a child is to live his own life—not the life his anxious parents think he should live, nor a life according to the purpose of the educator who thinks he knows what is best. All of this interference and guidance on the part of adults only produces a generation of robots."

May Summerhill live long and prosper, and thanks again to Albert Lamb for keeping the written wisdom of A. S. Neill alive for yet another generation.

Emotional Intelligence
by Daniel Goleman
Published by Bantam Books
New York, 1995
352 Pages (hard cover) $23.95

It's finally gotten to the point where someone has decided to write a book pointing out the value of helping children to understand and handle their feelings. I'm not sure which is the good news and which is the bad news.

Drawing on Howard Gardner's now familiar notion of "multiple intelligences," psychologist/writer Daniel Goleman places emotional awareness and expression where they rightfully belong—at the center of a model of real intelligence. Goleman defines "emotional intelligence" as "aptitudes for living," a combination of motivation, persistence, self-control and zeal, and he says that kids who develop these attributes are far more likely to realize their potential than kids who do not. In other words, intelligence is not genetically fixed as some would argue, but rather is largely a learned function whose successful development depends a great deal on emotional well-being.

The author readily acknowledges that this is not a revolutionary concept, but claims that he now has the science to back it up; and so the first half of *Emotional Intelligence* runs through the recent and astounding research on the structure of the brain. Goleman starts by pointing out that once upon a time B. F. Skinner and the behaviorists had succeeded in virtually banning the emotions from being a subject of scientific study, and that even Gardner had chosen to more or less ignore them, focusing instead only on cognitive functioning. I was sorry to find that Goleman makes no mention, as Joseph Chilton Pearce did extensively in *Evolution's End,* of recent research which shows the heart literally to be a thinking organ working in close communion with the brain; but then again, popularizers tend to stick to middle of the road stuff.

Goleman's style is journalistic. He uses sensational stories gleaned from the newspapers to demonstrate how serious a pickle the society is in and to reinforce his thesis that much of the trouble—the violence, crime and abuse—is symptomatic of how much we have ignored the dynamics of emotion in modern life.

So far, so good. But then Goleman, in the book's final section, goes on to describe model school programs from around the country which are teaching "emotional literacy" to children. Now I realize that objecting to such a thing would be tantamount to arguing against motherhood; but, quite frankly, there's something about the idea, and even this clever new term, which frightens me. What a sad commentary on today's world that there has to be a didactic curriculum to "teach" children to identify their feelings and to be empathetic. Isn't this an indication of the increasing artificiality of modern life?—with everything one step removed from its original source of meaning—like classroom lessons in emotions and empathy.

My problem with professionally engineered, prepackaged solutions like these is that they have the invisible effect of reinforcing the very problem they're purporting to solve. Why not just allow kids and adults to set up a community where they create their own rules and where they all have an equal stake in the time they spend together each day? Remove the artificial authority, the sorting and grading and all the restrictions on movement and association and they will begin to teach themselves and each other how to recognize, understand and appropriately express their feelings, and how to work out their differences more or less to everyone's satisfaction.

Short of that, I guess we need a book like Goleman's to teach adults how to teach kids how to be "emotionally literate." Oh well.

Natural Learning Rhythms
by Josette and Sambhava Luvmour
Published by Celestial Arts
Berkeley, CA 1993
($12.95 Paper)

Leery of any label, be it "New Age," or "humanistic," or "wholistic," I think that here we have a parenting guide for parents of my generation and younger which might comfortably wear all of the above.

There's nothing revolutionary contained in *Natural Learning Rhythms;* instead here you will find a well thought out reworking of the ideas of pioneers in child development like Maria Montessori, Rudolph Steiner, Jean Piaget and Joseph Chilton Pearce, written in nineties' parlance with a particular emphasis on addressing the problems of today's families: single parenting, blended families, both parents working, time and money stress, etc. They include numerous and quite personal case history-type vignettes to bring their theoretical ideas effectively down to earth.

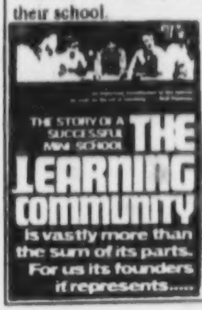
The Luvmours, a husband and wife family counseling team working in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas in California, recognize the increasing level of separation between modern parents and their own parenting instincts which has resulted in the rise of the great shibboleth of my generation—am I doing it right? Indeed, nowadays far too many parents are at a loss when it comes time to deal with our children's basic developmental passages—or lack thereof—and end up allowing their fear and guilt to keep them from picking up on their kids' signals. But at this point the authors throw us a big fat rope, one quite easy to grab. Relying on the recent writings of Pearce and others, they point out that parents don't have to know it all because our kids have their own built-in developmental wisdom—hence the title of the book, a large portion of which is taken up by a fleshing out of the Luvmour's version of a model that also takes into account the vast individual differences between children and their families.

Their developmental model is essentially Piagetan, well translated into layman's terms, and with the following improvement: it takes child development out of an artificial research environment and places it where it rightly belongs—in the dynamic give and take between real members of real families. According to the Luvmours, the ingredients of good parenting are really pretty simple after all. We need to observe our kids as they actually are and not as we wish or imagine them to be; we need to listen carefully and actively to their reports on their reality as they see it and we need to give effective and honest feedback in return; and above all, we need to trust that our kids possess the wherewithal to know themselves and what they need at a given moment.

In other words, if we only relax and learn to tune in to their frequency, our kids will help to lead the way through the narrow places through which every child inevitably must pass. Stressing the key words communication and relationships throughout, the Luvmours' bottom line is that child development/parenting is a collaborative effort, with very little fixed or written in stone. Supermoms and superdads take note: there's no right way to do it.

The Learning Community:
the Story of a Successful Mini-school
by James Penha and John Azrak

Long out of print, this book tells the story of five high school teachers who successfully create an alternative "school-within-a-school. It is filled with the reflections of both the teachers and the students of how they created a caring atmosphere of community in their school.


THE STORY OF A SUCCESSFUL MINI SCHOOL
THE LEARNING COMMUNITY
is vastly more than the sum of its parts. For us its founders it represents.....

"We need to apply these ideas *today*."
—Jerry Mint

"This book comes just in time. I congratulate the authors. They might not realize it, but they have made and important contribution to the science as well as the art of teaching." —Neil Postman

Send for a **FREE** copy today!
Bob Knipe, 40-18, 21st Avenue
Astoria, New York 11105
1-718-274-1624

Nancy Ost, mother of four, grandmother of a dazzler of a toddler, is a writer, an editor of both ΣΚΟΛΕ and the Journal of Family Life, a long-time teacher at the Free School, a massage therapist and has been the co-director of the school for the past five or more years.

SEVEN TIMES THE SUN:
Guiding your child through the rhythms of the day

by Shea Darian
Publisher, LuraMedia, San Diego, 1994
Paperback, $15.95

Reviewed by Nancy Ost

I must admit that I carry a bias when I am presented with a new how-to parenting book. And that bias is that I am going to find pages of what I call "airy-fairy" ideas. By that I mean ideas that are ungrounded in reality, ideas that do not suit the harried, working lives of most parents today; idealistic notions that may only be put into action by families where the mom stays at home and devotes her life to her children. I believe that child-centered families often do not present children with a realistic, healthy role model for what it means to be a self-respecting and self-nurturing adult.

I am delighted to say that Shea Darian does none of the above. Instead she offers us a helpful and compassionate guide which reminds us of the importance of rhythm and ritual in all of our lives. At the same time she honors the difficult job of parenting in our modern society and presents us with quick and simple ways to recenter ourselves and reconnect with our children.

As I browsed through this collection of songs, verses, rituals, and fairy tales, I was reminded how much better I feel when I take a moment to breathe and let go of my busy working-mom mentality. It is often my youngest, insisting on his need for a story and song at bedtime, no matter how late the hour, who brings me back to that need for ritual in myself. When I resist him because I am so tired at the end of the day and his request feels like just one more thing to do, I expend more energy arguing, thus making bedtime a trial instead of a pleasure. When I agree to my son's request and start to read or sing, I feel my body relax and I know that I am receiving a gift. I have learned from experiences like this that Shea is ever-so-right in her premise that ritual is nourishing and essential for each of us individually, as well as for our family life.

Seven Times the Sun presents ideas to honor the beginning of the day as simple as finding an alternative to the "alarming" alarm clock. Shea gives us ideas of stories to tell, songs to sing or the simple ritual of looking out the window on arising and talking with our children about the new day. I have a friend who ritualizes each new day and meditates by playing solitaire while she sips her morning coffee. Shea believes that we must come to the task of parenting refreshed and tells of rituals she has found helpful towards this end.

This book presents parents with ways to honor all the rhythms we experience each day from rising in the morning to meal time, playtime, work time, quiet time, skinned-knee time, family time and then bedtime. And the chapter called "Celebrating Peacemaking" gives an honest view of conflict between parent and child:

> With our children we are faced with the best and worst in ourselves. Perhaps no one in our lives can inspire our hostility and anger to surface quite as readily and completely as these people we call our daughters and sons.

Shea tells how she has "lost it" with her own children and how she has paid a huge price in self-hatred as a result—an experience every parent has had, I am sure. She offers us alternatives which will benefit the relationship with our children after the inevitable conflicts occur—alternatives which bring healing to all. She encourages us to become aware of our own states-of-mind, so that we might express our inner stress in healthy ways instead of through conflict.

Shea Adrian has written a unique and creative guide for parents which can be read slowly and whose ideas can be put into practice as each parent feels the need. She brings us a loving and compassionate reminder that nurturing oneself is very important when in the role of taking care of children. Maybe the fact that Shea was working as a Protestant minister before she decided to quit her job to have children explains the fact that her book contains such an immense amount of heart and spirit. It is this heart and spirit which makes it such a joy to read and as Shea says, "When you honor the ordinary moments of life, you bring balance and joy to your family."

HUMOR:

Your editor has been blessed with an amazing Motherlode of jokes and other funny stuff as a result of going on-line. I have enough now to start a regular humor section, which I am initiating with this issue. Hope you enjoy them! I've got lots more:

This one came from a homeschooling friend from Rainbow Lake in the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. Does any of it ring a bell? Hope you found it as funny as I did! But I'm not as close to it as a lot of you are. Send me some of your own, OK?

For ΣKOΛE::
From G. J. Poronsky via something called c-news:

The Math Quiz

1. TRADITIONAL MATH (1960)
A Logger sells a truckload of lumber for $100. His cost of production is 4/5 of the price; in other words, $80. What is his profit?

2. NEW MATH (1970)
A Logger exchanges set L of lumber for set M of money. The cardinality of set M is 100 and each element is worth $1. Make 100 dots representing the elements of set M. The set C of costs contains 20 fewer points than set M. Represent set C as a subset of set M, and answer the following question: What is the cardinality of the set P of profits?

3. GENERAL MATH CONCEPTS (1980) (NEA FINGERS IN THE PIE)
A Logger sell a truckload of wood for $100. His cost of production is $80 and his profit is $20. Your assignment: Underline the number 20.

4. OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION (1990) (GOALS 2000?)
By cutting down beautiful forest trees, a logger makes $20. What do you think of making a living this way? Topic for discussion: How did the forest birds and squirrels feel?

Topic for discussion: How did the forest birds and squirrels feel?

This one came from my son Tom, who calls himself Tilapia@aol.com. Sounds pretty fishy to me! Anyhow, Tom has a connection via e-mail with a guy named Rob who sends him regular therapeutic doses of funny stuff. Here's one for openers:*

Ban Dihydrogen Monoxide!
The Invisible Killer

Dihydrogen monoxide is colorless, odorless, tasteless, and kills uncounted thousands of people every year. Most of these deaths are caused by accidental inhalation of DHMO, but the dangers of dihydrogen monoxide do not end there. Prolonged exposure to its solid form causes severe tissue damage. Symptoms of DHMO ingestion can include excessive sweating and urination, and possibly a bloated feeling, nausea, vomiting and body electrolyte imbalance. For those who have become dependent, DHMO withdrawal means certain death.

Dihydrogen monoxide:

* is also known as hydroxl acid, and is the major component of acid rain.
* contributes to the "greenhouse effect."
* may cause severe burns.
* contributes to the erosion of our natural landscape.
* accelerates corrosion and rusting of many metals.
* may cause electrical failures and decreased effectiveness of automobile brakes.
* has been found in excised tumors of terminal cancer patients.

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* Tilapia is the name of a fish that is being grown for food in greenhouses and holding tanks on fish farms. It tastes very good and is easy to grow. Tom doesn't, but he was.

Contamination Is Reaching Epidemic Proportions!

Quantities of dihydrogen monoxide have been found in almost every stream, lake, and reservoir in America today. But the pollution is global, and the contaminant has even been found in Antarctic ice. DHMO has caused millions of dollars of property damage in the midwest, and recently California.

Despite the danger, dihydrogen monoxide is often used:

* as an industrial solvent and coolant.
* in nuclear power plants.
* in the production of styrofoam.
* as a fire retardant.
* in many forms of cruel animal research.
* in the distribution of pesticides. Even after washing, produce remains contaminated by this chemical.
* as an additive in certain "junk-foods" and other food products.

Companies dump waste DHMO into rivers and the ocean, and nothing can be done to stop them because this practice is still legal. The impact on wildlife is extreme, and we cannot afford to ignore it any longer!

The Horror Must Be Stopped!

The American government has refused to ban the production, distribution, or use of this damaging chemical due to its "importance to the economic health of this nation." In fact, the navy and other military organizations are conducting experiments with DHMO, and designing multi-billion dollar devices to control and utilize it during warfare situations. Hundreds of military research facilities receive tons of it through a highly sophisticated underground distribution network. Many store large quantities for later use.

It's Not Too Late!

Act NOW to prevent further contamination. Find out more about this dangerous chemical. What you don't know can hurt you and others throughout the world.

Note: if you don't get this one, ask your mom or your dad. If they don't get it, ask your best buddy and together maybe you can figure it out.

And here's one from my daughter Ellen:

Statements I'll bet you've never considered:

Give me ambiguity or give me something else.
Make it idiot proof and someone will make a better idiot.

He who laughs last thinks slowest!
Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else.

Lottery: A tax on people who are bad at math.

Artificial Intelligence usually beats real stupidity.

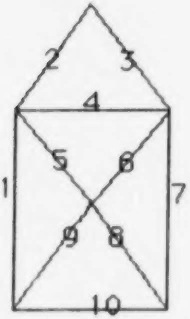
I wouldn't be caught dead with a necrophiliac...

"Very funny, Scotty. Now beam down my clothes."

Okay, who put a "stop payment" on my reality check?
We have enough youth, how about a fountain of SMART?
All generalizations are false. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

Got any you'd care to send me for the next kids' issue? Write to Mary, 72 Philip St., Albany, NY 12202, or send it by e-mail to MarySKOLE@aol.com.

The Outhouse Puzzle:



Actually, Ian had tried to send me his penny puzzles solutions via e-mail, but I guess he misunderstood what I wanted or goofed because he sent the puzzles again instead. The answers will be in the next issue (the winter issue) so if you're still struggling with them, look for them there. Hey, if you figure them, or one of them, out first, we'll publish your solution instead!

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(9/92)